

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Arguments for the Existence of God.* By John Hick. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. \$6.95. 148 pp. Reviewed by Dr. Clark H. Pinnock, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

This valuable book by a very important theologian belongs to an equally valuable series in the philosophy of religion in which appears *Concepts of Deity* by H. P. Owen and *Contemporary Critiques of Religion* by Kai Nielsen. This particular book which evaluates the metaphysical adequacy of theistic belief would make an excellent textbook for a course in Christian apologetics.

The form of the book is quite simple. Hick expounds and critiques the standard philosophical arguments which have been advanced on behalf of God's existence, that is, the teleological, the cosmological, the moral, and the ontological arguments. And he does this in a concise and lucid manner which distinguishes this book from some others in its class.

The most interesting aspect of the book for the student of Hick's earlier writings is the degree of metaphysical affirmation which Hick is now willing to make. His book *Faith and Knowledge* was so reserved along these lines that the convictions now expressed, though they fall far short of H. P. Owen's in the companion book, are a welcome surprise. While he would not hold with Tennant that the argument from design can establish the existence of a creative mind behind the universe, he is willing to say that the evidence raises the question of God quite definitely and makes theistic belief fully rational. Similarly the cosmological argument which holds that the existence of a contingent world requires non-contingent or necessary being to account for it Hick considers to point to theism as the only way to arrive at the final intelligibility of the universe. On the moral argument he is even more forthright. He considers the fact of moral obligation to present a 'fatal challenge' to the humanist philosophy. For if the self is posited as the final value, then any act involving a degree of self-sacrifice is irrational. Hick's point can be used with great effect with nonchristians who are concerned to maintain an ethical stance. Two chapters are devoted to the ontological argument in its various forms from Anselm to Hartshorne, and Hick finds all of them wanting. This argument, unlike the three preceding, cannot even point to the possibility of God, being an *a priori* proof. It must either succeed completely or fail completely. It fails because of the illicit move it makes from the ideal to the real.

The last chapter of the book deals with theistic beliefs which try to get along without proofs. Despite his concessions to theistic apologetics Hick shows himself most sympathetic to this point of view. By no means all believers are saddened by the small success of metaphysical reasoning. For them God is first of all an experienced reality, not at all the conclusion of a rational inference. Therefore Hick ends his book with the quite minimal thesis that although one cannot expect to bring the unbeliever to faith by means of rational arguments he can at least defend the belief that he does hold as rational. Thus the book ends not with a bang but with a whimper. Nevertheless, we have here a most excellent exposition of the reasonableness of theism from which no reader can fail to benefit, a book which has much to offer even in the context of a stronger metaphysical affirmation.

*A Biblical Theology of Missions.* By George W. Peters. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press. 368 pp. \$6.95. Reviewed by J. Herbert Kane, Professor of Missions, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

For many years R. H. Glover's *The Bible Basis of Missions* was the only theology of the Christian mission written from a conservative point of view. Now after several decades of dearth we have Peters' *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. It was long overdue and is as welcome as the flowers in spring.

As the title would suggest, the book is rooted in the Holy Scriptures. Altogether there are slightly more than 1,000 Scripture references. Very wisely the author sets forth his own theological stance in the Preface. There he states, without apology and without ambiguity, his conservative stand on the Bible, which he accepts "uncritically and authoritatively" (p. 9). He accepts the "historic, conservative and evangelical position of all the books of the Bible." Though he is acquainted with the writings of modern missiologists, in an effort to avoid all conflict (p. 10) he has quoted from none of them. Indeed, there are very few quotations in the entire book, and most of them come from older writers—Westcott, Ellicott, Morgan, Zwemer, *et al.* He acknowledges, however, his indebtedness to Robert E. Speer. Otherwise the book is an "exposition of the missionary intent of God" as the author sees it in the "progressive unfolding of the Bible" (p. 10).

After a 16-page Introduction dealing with the universality of both sin and the gospel, the author divides his subject into three parts: Biblical Foundations of Missions, Biblical Delineations of Missions, and Biblical Instruments and Dynamics of Missions. He begins, not with the Old Testament teaching about missions, but with missions as it relates to Jesus Christ and the Nature of God. Only then does he go back and trace the development of the missionary element in the Old and New Testaments.

Throughout the book certain emphases come through loud and clear: the theocentricity of the Christian mission, the importance of proclamation, the centrality of the local church, the lordship of Christ, etc.

Peters takes a somewhat narrow view of missions, which he reduces to gospel preaching and church planting. He believes there is a place for social action and humanitarian service, but these are not an essential part of missions as outlined in the New Testament.

The author has a strong section on discipleship. His definition differs radically from that espoused by some other schools of thought. According to Peters, "A disciple is a believing person living a life of conscious and constant identification with the Lord in life, death, and resurrection through words, behavior, attitudes, motives, purpose, fully realizing Christ's absolute ownership of his life, joyfully embracing the saviorhood of Christ, delighting in the lordship of Christ, and living by the abiding, indwelling resources of Christ according to the imprinted pattern and purpose of Christ for the chief end of glorying his Lord and Savior" (p. 188).

In his chapter on Instruments of Missions, Peters has a helpful section on the missionary call. There he rightfully points out that there is actually a threefold call—to salvation, to discipleship, and to ministry. In contrast to Roland Allen, Peters suggests that the modern missionary is called to follow Paul's principles rather than his methods, for Paul and the 20th century missionary in many ways are poles apart.

Although repeated reference is made to the lordship of Christ, the topic is nowhere given separate treatment. The same can be said for another important doctrine—the sovereignty of God. Only seven pages (299-306) are given to the place of the Holy Spirit in missions. Nothing is said concerning Satanic opposition, or spiritual warfare and such related things as idolatry, demon-possession, etc.

There are three pages of Notes. To the delight of the publisher but the dismay of the reader, these footnotes are listed in the back of the book! A bibliography of both books and periodicals greatly enhances the value of the book. There is also a Scripture Index and a Selective Subject Index.

George Peters is to be congratulated on making such a solid and significant contribution to the literature on missiology.

*Encounter with God.* By Morton Kelsey. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship Press, 281 pp. 1973. Reviewed by John H. Stoll, chairman, Department of Biblical Studies, Grace College.

For the Christian who desires a book that "puts it all together," here is an excellent volume that provides the basic philosophical, historical, psychological, and Biblical basis of mankind's intensive search for an encounter with God. This is a finely reasoned, rational book that gives the panoramic picture of God's dealings with mankind down through the centuries. Kelsey's basic premise is to take mankind where he is, and in dealing with him on that basis, going from there to lead him into a true spiritual encounter with God.

Going back to and beginning with Plato and Aristotle, the author weaves a very excellent picture of the philosophical base in order to help mankind in his search for reality. From this base the author has charted through the centuries until modern times, philosophical thought in the development of mankind's understanding as it stems from the divergent views of Plato and Aristotle. He integrates the historical accounts of these philosophies that have permeated the Eastern as well as the Western world. Various civilizations have used "myth" as a means whereby one may try to understand the basic elements of man's spiritual desires. Kelsey has correctly and finely made the distinction between myths that are pure fables, and myths as used in the proper sense of the term to convey an understanding through symbolic stories the truth of the spiritual world of reality. In addition, he has woven a fine thread in noting the distinctions between the Eastern thought, which characteristically has had few problems in relation to the spiritual world, from that of Western thought which beginning with Descartes has projected an empirical mode of search upon Western minds, almost to the exclusion of the non-physical world.

Kelsey very deftly shows the split in the Catholic church which held to the "old world" ideals as formulated both theologically and scientifically from the days of Aquinas, and how this has caused the church to become "locked in" to that mode of thinking. Modern times brought a revolution through such men as Copernicus and Galileo, and others of modern day scientific thought with which the church was unable to cope, and thus the split between the church and science was begun.

Then with the coming of the Protestant Reformation, and later on the emergence of liberal theology, Western man became immersed in two religious systems with an almost hopeless and fruitless search for the true realities of the spiritual world. From both the Catholic point of view as well as that of the Protestant, the vast majority of mankind has not known spiritual avenues for teaching to which they could turn, and because of this impasse Kelsey shows how modern day psychology has tried to provide an understanding for the non-physical or spiritual longings of men's hearts. He very pointedly notes that psychology, which has by default had to do the job of spiritually helping mankind, in reality has taken over because of the real lack of spiritual forces within the church. For as he points out, it was the work of Christ in starting the church, and the coming of the Holy Spirit that provided peace in the unconscious (spiritual) realm, as well as providing strength and hope in the conscious realm. And for Kelsey, this is what life is all about.

As a background to writing this type of a volume, Kelsey, a professor in the area of Religious Education at Notre Dame University and an Episcopalian minister, had in his formative learning years a liberal theological training. Then with the help of a psychiatrist, Dr. C. G. Jung, he was also to find spiritual satisfaction and longing, through taking seriously the truth of Scripture in the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for him. This helped break him out of the mold of liberal theology under

which he had labored for many years. As a result of his own personal experiences, Kelsey has been able to assist others out of the liberal morass of hopelessness, who like himself have been molded by Western empirical framework of thought, without realizing the peace and hope that could be found in Jesus Christ, and the spiritual realities of life.

A book like this should have been written long before, for enquiring evangelical minds, to help them in understanding the problems many people experience. Kelsey recognizes (p. 35) that there have been certain spiritual-minded Christians who have always put serious stock in a divine encounter with God, but he does not recognize that in this country alone there may be well over 25 million of them who down through the years have seriously taken God at His Word. Furthermore, he says, encounters with divine reality are not common (p. 40) and thereby does not realize that there are many millions of people who daily have a divine encounter with God in a very personal and spiritual way. The spiritual Christian has a continuous divine encounter as I Cor. 2:14 tells us through which the spiritual man is given discernment by the Holy Spirit.

Kelsey rightly points out that in the Bible the Apostle John puts it well in his first letter when he said that no man could love God and not love his brother (p. 121). This is true, but in order to genuinely love one's brother, one must first of all accept the love of God to overcome the lack of natural love in the individual, or really the lack of love that is caused by the forces of darkness that constantly overwhelm the individual. Certainly in Kelsey's analysis of Jung, one would not find much of a Christian order in the Scriptural sense, for seemingly in Jung there is not an apparent need for regeneration, but more of the self coming to terms with self. This has the flavor of a "bootstrap" type of a religion, which has been all too common among various peoples down through the centuries, and is clearly anti-Scriptural.

Kelsey shows quite clearly the problem of demon oppression as seen in the spirit world, which he calls the forces of darkness that can easily overcome the individual. This is certainly consistent with Scriptural teaching where John points out that the Christian is to prove or try the spirits because many false spirits have gone into the world (I John 4:1-3). Kelsey rightly says, "One who really knows the depth of man will realize the reality of these spiritual invasions" (p. 130).

Kelsey notes in regard to sufferings that "the Christian is in a very different position from Job in his agony" (p. 158). He goes on to state that the Christian has the reality of Jesus Christ, but did not Job also have that reality for he said, "I know that my redeemer liveth. . ." (Job 19:25). Though Job may not have had the reality of understanding as we do today, it is true that the account in the book of Job shows that he had much more spiritual insight than we may wish to concede to him. In commenting on the Holy Spirit, Kelsey correctly points out that, "the experience of being filled with the Spirit is a kind of mysticism which is usually found only in

Western thought and in Christianity in particular. In it the ultimate religious experience is seen as one which does not annihilate the ego" (p. 165). The Scriptural injunction in Eph. 5:18 where the Christian is told to be filled with the Spirit certainly does bring a proper balance in life to the Christian which is so essential in coming to wholeness in the Christian life. As Kelsey furthermore says, "Wholeness is tasted for a moment and then becomes a goal, the end to be sought in life, and found finally in the next life" (p. 165). For the child of God it is wonderful to have the comforting words of Scripture in Phil. 1:6 where Paul says, "Being confident of this very thing, that the Holy Spirit who hath begun a good work in you will perform it completely until the day of Jesus Christ." For the Christian who has the help of the Holy Spirit who is in you is greater than Satan who is in the world" (I John 4:4).

"The idea of the atonement was experientially based. Somehow through the cross and resurrection the forces of evil had been turned back; man had been given protection and saved. In the crucifixion and resurrection Jesus had wrought some changes in the very nature of the spiritual world, and those who were close to him shared in his victory. At present this was partial, but in the last days it would be all inclusive" (p. 167). It is difficult from this to say whether Kelsey is preaching a universalism of sorts in which at the end time all will be saved. But certainly universalism is not that which Scripture teaches, for one who does not accept the redemptive work of Christ in turning back the evil forces will then be involved with those evil forces and the ultimate conclusion will be eternal separation from God.

In pointing out the need for a true spiritual experience, Kelsey says, "Probably there is reason for the concern which some psychologists show when people seem to become too much interested in religion. It is not too much religion, however, but the wrong kind of religion which helps a man toward madness" (p. 173). It is certainly true that one cannot get too much of Christianity as Christ proclaimed it, but it is also true that Satan is quite deceptive and provides an overwhelming force of the wrong religion that ultimately engulfs mankind in darkness.

Kelsey comes to an excellent climax, when in relating the responsibility that one has to the impartation of spiritual truth to others, says, "One very important quality of such a teacher is the confidence which he sometimes feels, sometimes only expresses as best he can in words and actions that there is a creative power in the universe, a power at best expressed in Christ and His Spirit which seeks to enter into a relationship with individuals, to protect and guide them toward wholeness and meaning" (p. 238). He then goes on to point out that the tool of the trade for the Christian in relating to other people is the Bible.

In the next to last chapter of the book Kelsey points out twelve rules for one to follow in order to relate to the spiritual world. As one peruses these rules it is easy to see that they are borne out of the author's own

experience of twenty years. These are excellent rules and ones that need to be followed. One could only wish that Kelsey had related his thoughts to a greater Scriptural authentication. In so doing he would have tied his own experiential understanding of the spiritual world to objective Scriptural truth.

All in all this is a most excellent volume for people to read. For those who are looking for a true "spiritual trip" in understanding the reality of the spiritual world this will be of tremendous value. To the Christian who may be "locked in" to an almost exclusively Scriptural point of view, in his spiritual life, this book will help to give him a broader and greater dimension of life to understand where man is today and how he came to be that way. In this way one can profit from the book so as to better understand the plight of mankind who is struggling with the powers of darkness, and trying to fight them from a material, empirical Western framework of mind.

*Latin American Theology: Radical or Evangelical.* By C. Peter Wagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. 118 pp. No index. Available in Spanish from Editorial Vida, Miami. Reviewed by T. D. Proffitt, III; an anthropologist with Andes Evangelical Mission.

The title of this well-written book raises some questions. Does the author intend to ask if Latin American theology is left or right, or is he asking what it will be at the struggle's end? He hopes that it will be evangelical and yet applicable to Latin needs. Neither Wagner nor those he discusses concern themselves with ethnotheologies for the indigeneous Indian populations of Latin America, a need yet to be filled.

Beginning with a review of the three streams of Latin Protestantism whose struggle to survive gave rise to a polemical anti-Catholic theology, Professor Wagner notes that the only social problem addressed at this stage was that of religious liberty. Institutions served the same means, rarely reflecting true social concern. Today social concern is very important to Latin American Protestants.

Following World War II, Protestants (evangelicos) came to see that anti-Catholicism was not a sufficient basis for unity. However, not all are agreed on the need for diversity. The result is that Latins have thrown the baby out with the bath water in a desire to have a theology devoid of North American constructs. Many are no longer evangelical. In their concern with social problems they have created a theology void of the vertical dimension. Ironically, while Catholicism is trying to purge itself of Cristopaganism, Protestants are producing a syncretism of their own.

The Radical builds his theology around the violent alternative. Being amillennial he will not await the end. The Kingdom is not a divine intervention in Danielic or apocalyptic terms. He challenges us to ask if the Church has a role, or does it just await the end?

Moderation tends towards extremism. Some of those first discussed are not radical. In time Wagner replaces straw men by live men whose theology is unbiblical. Radical theology is syncretistic by accommodation to politics and sociology. They lack a supernatural perspective and an eschatological urgency. They are not true prophets because they accommodate themselves to the philosophies of the day. In this they are indistinguishable from North American liberal Protestants.

Evangelical solutions are weak. Padilla's view that one begins with man in God's image is good, but is limited to church growth. Leaders need followers. Fajardo is mostly presence based on "if." Strategy is not built on "perhaps" but on reality. Neither Rico nor Evangelism-in-depth really offer solutions. The latter does point out the polarity in current Latin American theology and the false dichotomy between faith and works, inherited from North American pietism. The Latin American evangelical is equally indistinguishable from his North American counterpart. Neither liberal nor evangelical has a truly Latin theology.

Wagner's solution has not met with much enthusiasm among Latin American Christians, especially the youth. His solution will require will power to be achieved. It can help prevent syncretism and simultaneously seek to solve social problems. Priorities must be established. Evangelism comes first, but it is not the only task of the church (p. 105). Social service (*diakonia*) is second, beginning with the household of faith. No strings are to be attached. At this point the English edition lacks the clarifying diagrams of the Spanish edition.

Latin American theology is not yet Biblical. The Radical camp lacks a vertical theology of salvation; while evangelical lack a theology of social action. Reconciliation comes through Jesus Christ; the Kingdom through divine action. If we fail to overcome the world the result is syncretism.