

BOOK REVIEWS

Pascal's Recovery of Man's Wholeness, by Albert N. Wells, John Knox Press; 174 pp; \$4.25. Reviewed by Dr. Paul Bechtel, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

Pascal's "mystical" experience of the night of November 23, 1654, when he was 31, made him totally God's man and his advocate among the intellectuals of his day. Renowned as a mathematician, but only a conventional Christian, Pascal became thereafter a fervent apologist for the faith, seeking ways to organize his own convictions and to persuade others of the reality of God in Christ Jesus. Was there a way in which the sovereignty of God in all things could be made clear to the seventeenth century mind with its emphasis on orderliness? Wells sees such a formulation set forth in *Pensee* 792, familiarly known as Pascal's orders. There a hierarchical structure of planes is suggested, matter, mind, and charity or love. Each of these orders has its own function and operational principles. The laws of the lower will not function in the higher order—the laws of physics are not the laws of the intellect nor the laws of the intellect the substance of love, which is supernatural. But the principles of love may move downward to exercise surveillance over the whole of cosmic reality.

In such a way reality may be seen bound together in wholeness, rather than fractured by discontinuities. This concept, however, becomes conviction only in the transformed mind. Pascal could not have conceived his orders before 1654. In his final chapter Wells asks whether this Pascalian approach to wholeness has validity in our time. He concludes that even in a world bewildered by the knowledge explosion in science, inundated by secularism, and harassed by seemingly insoluble political realities Pascal's orders still offer a route to a recovered wholeness. Like so many other resolutions of our vexatious problems, this one too would bring a bright new dawn if only the world would taste and see that it is good.

Albert Wells has written a fine book, a worthy contribution to the long heritage of Pascalian scholarship. His insights are valid, his style lucid and firm. The propositions here set forth are not new but are fresh restatements of continuing truths.

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Christian Responsibility in One World. By A. Theodore Eastman. New York: The Seabury Press, 1965. Pp. 119 plus notes and bibliography. \$3.50. Reviewed by Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

This addition to the growing ecumenical bibliography on the mission of the church is based upon the Kellogg Lectures delivered at the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1963. Mr. Eastman has been the Executive Secretary of the Overseas Mission Society of the Episcopal Church since 1956.

The author's touchstones are the ideas of Arnold Toynbee, Max Warren, W. E. Hocking, Paul Tillich, and John Robinson. His understanding of the mission of the church is succinctly summed up in the words "... I believe... that Christianity's unique vocation is to foster the climate and provide the occasions in and through which advances toward the unification of the world may take place" (p. 35). Five cardinal principles are advocated to guide our encounter with other faiths: (1) to "be present" in the midst of men (rather than to convert them); (2) to be present as a listener; (3) to take the non-Christian seriously; (4) to meet Christ in the encounter, not to "bring him;" and (5) to trust the Holy Spirit "in the midst of the exploration." Beyond this kind of meeting with non-Christian faiths, Eastman calls the church to a serious encounter with quasi-religions such as Marxism, nationalism, humanism, and secular materialism, with the awareness that "no unity will be achieved in this world without coming to terms with them" (p. 65).

An evangelical Christian can certainly be appreciative of certain aspects of Eastman's five principles. He will be in sympathy with the insistence that, rather than a refurbished theology of mission, the church needs theology itself, for theology *is* theology of mission. He sincerely hopes, however, that this theology will be informed by a touchstone not in evidence in this book—the Holy Scriptures. For this hope there is some basis in the author's call for earnest and thorough Bible study.

The evangelical missiologist stands to gain by a consideration of the author's emphases on the roles of the laity and non-professional missionaries, the importance of international congregations, and the missionary's foreignness as an asset. But, more than this, he will be in complete agreement with Mr. Eastman in his assertion that the new approach herein espoused involves great risk. In fact, unless the evangelical has a firm grip on his chair, he runs the immediate risk of falling over when he reads that the new approach is the "oldest Christian approach of all," and that it was "employed by Jesus of Nazareth!"

The Mystery of Israel—An Exposition of Romans 9-11. By H. L. Ellison. Grand Rapids, Mich. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966. 96 pp. Reviewed by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg.

H. L. Ellison, known for his able expositions of Scripture, was a missionary among the Jews for nineteen years. Thus he brings to bear upon the subject of Israel a background of practical experience as well as a deep knowledge of the Hebrew and rabbinical sources on the Biblical text.

With great cogency he shows the pivotal importance of Romans 9-11, which far too often is relegated by commentators to a parenthetical or subordinate position in the argument of the Apostle Paul (pp. 24-28, 29). Now, since Vatican II and its new pronouncements on the Jews, these chapters are assuming more of their rightful place in theological thinking. Ellison writes with warmth and even heartache as he says, "It has always been a mystery to me how so many who follow in the footsteps of Augustine and Calvin can so cheerfully think of God casting off His

people (even though this is expressly denied in 11:1)" (p. 28).

Earnestly he insists that the Church with her multiplied glories has no need "to steal a few plumes from Israel" (p. 33). Believers now should be the first to rejoice that God intends to fulfill all His promises to Israel (p. 38).

Since the heart of these chapters in Romans is the subject of election, the author carefully deals with the doctrine, shows its relationship to man's responsibility, and reveals how national election in itself was insufficient to obtain the fulness of God's blessing. Some statements may be confusing to the reader, for instance, "We must grasp firmly that Paul is proclaiming the failure not merely of ethnic Jewry but also of elect Jewry within it, not merely of the accident of birth but also apparently of the ongoing purpose of God within it" (p. 77). There appears to be an unnecessary introduction of a *tertium quid* in the discussion of "election within the election" (pp. 79, 96).

The view that the root of 11:16, 18 is not Abraham but Christ (so also Jocz) will be questioned by many (p. 86), likewise, the distinctions deduced from *skleros*, *porosis* (p. 77), and *pleroma* (p. 91). The reviewer finds it difficult to follow the reasoning in the statement: "All Israel is a statement not merely of the people of the end time, but of all generations" (p. 93).

A fine devotional tone is present throughout the work; e.g., "In the voice of His Son weeping over Jerusalem we may hear the suffering love of the Father as well" (p. 95). Ellison has placed us in his debt for this serious and considered treatment of these crucial chapters on Israel in Romans.

Myth and Truth. By John Knox. Charlottesville, The University Press of Virginia, 1964. 87 pp. \$2.50. Reviewed by Gordon H. Clark, Butler University.

The author begins by assuming that Christianity is essentially mythological. Genesis 1 is in the same class with Homer. Since myth is the use of imagery to express otherworldly themes in terms of this world, the story of redemption must be a myth.

Although Dr. Knox asserts that a mythological story does not have to be false, and even in one sense must be true, he so defines truth as to guarantee the falsity of the Biblical and creedal statements.

Neither the Bible nor the creeds are supposed to give factual statements. To speak factually of God's doings would be to identify God with man and the world. Faith has nothing to do with facts or truth or propositions; faith gives us no answers to any questions. The Biblical stories must be reduced to our existential conditions. Genesis 1 is not an account of what happened in the past, but an expression of what man is now.

Therefore Protestants should accept a measure of Romish Mariolatry. It is a valuable expression of subjective experience. Thus if all the churches would understand their creeds as mythological expressions of

inexpressible personal experience, we could all unite, recite the Apostles Creed together, knowing it to be false, and form a world-wide ecclesiastical monstrosity that would live happily ever after in ecumenical bliss.

The Gospel According to John. By George Allen Turner, Ph.D., and Julius R. Mantey, Th.D. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d. Pp. xiii, plus 420, including bibliography and index. \$8.95. Reviewed by Dr. M. Tenney, (Dean of the Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton, Illinois)

Commentaries often tell the reader everything except what he wants to know about the text that he is reading. This commentary is a happy exception, for it provides in plain language a usable guide to the study of JOHN. The book is divided into two main sections: an Introduction, which summarizes the influence, peculiar features, problems, authorship, date, provenance, and distinctive teaching of the Gospel, and the Commentary proper, which is organized by chapters, and based on the American Standard Version of the Bible. Under each chapter the text is cited in full, with appropriate exegetical notes, and a running exposition. Dr. Mantey provided the exegesis of chapters six through twenty-one; Dr. Turner supplied the exegesis of the remaining chapters and the total exposition.

The exegesis is thorough, Biblical, and conservative. Individual word studies enrich its interpretation, and numerous cross-references integrate JOHN with the rest of the Bible. The structure of the text is outlined by sub-heads in the chapters and by diagrams. Footnote references in small type afford ample resources of investigation for those who desire scholarly research. The authors show a wide acquaintance with modern literature on JOHN, and incorporate the best of recent interpretations in their discussion.

The running exposition is easy to follow, and does not lapse into trivia, nor wander off into fanciful tangents. Useful illustrative material is included that adds to interest for the casual reader, or that will aid the preacher who is preparing his next sermon.

Maps and a selected bibliography on JOHN enhance the usefulness of this book as an aid to study. The index, however, is all too brief, and could well be expanded to include more theological subjects.

For the scholarly reader, the chief value will lie in the digest of varying opinions in interpretation and in the footnotes which serve as a partial index to current literature on JOHN. The commentary is generally non-technical; but it contains much information that the technical scholar can use to good advantage.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society will be held at Toronto Bible College, Toronto, Canada from noon, December 27—noon December 29, 1967. For further information write to Dr. K. S. Kantzer, program chairman, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois 60015.