

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Paul and James.* By Walter Schmithals. Translated by D. M. Barton. ("Studies in Biblical Theology," No. 46.) London: S. C. M. Press, 1965. 117 pages plus bibliography and indices. 18s. (= \$2.52).

*Three Crucial Decades.* By Floyd V. Filson. London: Epworth Press, 1964. 118 pages. 10/6 (= \$1.47).

Reviewed by Dr. Richard N. Longenecker, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Two small, yet significant, works on early Christianity have recently reached the English-speaking public. Walter Schmithals' *Paul and James* was published first, in German in 1963 and now in English in 1965. Floyd Filson's *Three Crucial Decades* represents the Smyth Lectures at Columbia Seminary in 1962, but took printed form only in 1964. While both deal with similar matters, their treatments are decidedly different in style and methodology — and often in conclusions. Schmithals writes as an academician with extensive footnoting; though, sadly, with a narrow and heavily weighted selection of sources. He follows Dibelius' form-criticism and had a profound skepticism of the historical value of Acts. Filson presents his material in popular fashion, gives only an occasional footnote, and has a high regard for the narrative of Acts. His constant attempt is to understand Acts on its own terms before attempting any reconstruction of the narrative, and his judgments reflect a broad range of scholarship.

In opposition to Tuebingen, and following the lines laid out in his 1956 *Die Gnosis in Korinth*, Schmithals' thesis is that the Pauline opponents in all of the apostle's churches (Galatia as well as Corinth) were Jewish or Jewish-Christian gnostics who as such had little or nothing to do with the primitive Jewish-Christian church; that Paul and the Jerusalem church (the whole, and especially James) were always concerned to preserve the unity of the church, and differed only in their sense of mission.

In demonstration of his thesis, Schmithals enters into a reconstruction of apostolic history. And in the process he makes many significant observations; e. g., on the practical necessity for the Jerusalem Christians to keep the Law if they would retain a measure of peace and their mission to Israel, on Paul's recognition and appreciation of the difficult straits the Jerusalem Christians were in, on the collection for the saints as an expression of unity without the connotation of a legal levy, and on Paul's willingness to keep the Jewish law in his last visit to Jerusalem. But in his acceptance of "Luke" as a second century author and of Acts as requiring twentieth century reorganization, the "ought to have beens" and "must have beens" dominate to the detriment of sound historiography. Thus, for example, he proclaims confidently that the "Antioch episode" was the real reason for the parting of Paul and Barnabas; Paul retained no fidelity to the Jewish law in his own personal practice; Paul's missionary activity in each city never began in the synagogue; there were none

in the Jerusalem church prior to A. D. 70 who could be called "zealous for the law" as Acts 21:20 makes out; the origin of the "Apostolic Decree" is entirely conjectural; and Paul never made an approach to a Jew except as that Jew was already apostate and could be classed as part of the Gentile mission.

Space forbids interaction on specifics. Much of this has been done in my *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*. Yet it is necessary to speak of Schmithals' method. Continually he poses basic questions in the form of sharp antitheses, and then works out his position to lopsided conclusions. His attack on Tuebingen follows Johannes Munck's *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (E. T.), but he can be justly accused of going beyond Munck in constructing his enquiry along the lines of either-or alternatives and of dealing in extremes in his positive reconstruction. Schmithals seems to lack appreciation for the complexity of real situations, and he manifests lack of balance. He is using a legitimate key to the Corinthians problems as a skeleton key to unlock every door in the Pauline mission, and in this forcing of the locks he often leaves a shambles in his wake. He can also be criticized for making no reference to the influence of Essene thought on the Jerusalem church and for ignoring the question of the extent to which the Nag Hammadi texts are rooted in earlier Jewish Christianity. For him, presumably, Qumran and Chenoboskion are irrelevant.

Over half of Filson's five lectures cover the same ground as treated by Schmithals. Filson too denies that James or Peter belonged to the Judaizers, and holds that an implicit note of universalism was present even in the earliest days of the church. Yet he is also ready to see a rightwing Judaizing movement within the Jerusalem church prior to A. D. 70 — an ultra-Jacobean group who indeed were not expressing the position of either James or Peter but could legitimately claim relation to both — and to recognize that even prior to the first destruction circumstances were growing to strengthen this movement.

Filson's work here is excellent. On some introductory matters evangelicals will differ (e. g., his treatment of the Epistle of James), but taking the work as a whole it reflects a sound historiography, perceptive insight, breadth of research, and balance of judgment. It lacks documentation and explicit interaction with scholarly opinion; but this is clearly due to the original style of the presentation, not to any inadequacy on the author's part. This reviewer cannot help but wish that, while Schmithals' work deserves publication, Filson's had been "beefed up" and taken the place of Schmithals' in the respected "Studies in Biblical Theology" series. Perhaps Professor Filson, as one of the editors of that series, was hesitant to make the change; or perhaps his thinking was only fully crystallized on some issues in response to Schmithals' German manuscript.

We stand in debt to these two works — if not always to the conclusions reached, at least in regard to the issues raised. There is a revival today in the study of early Jewish Christianity, and the movement away from radical conclusions in some circles of thought is noteworthy. With the material of the Dead Sea scrolls and the Nag Hammadi texts, the area has been opened wide. Evangelicals, too, need to enter the field while foundations are being laid.

*Protestantism in an Ecumenical Age.* By Otto A. Piper. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965. ix plus 249 pages and index. \$4.50.

Reviewed by Dr. Addison H. Leitch, Tarkio College, Tarkio, Missouri.

It is the opinion of the reviewer that once again there is a definite "Princeton Theology" — almost as clear in character as that of the days of Hodge and Warfield. It is also clear that this theology has been growing and hardening at Princeton for at least twenty years. It seems quite evident as well that this theology, by way of Hendry and Dowey, underlies the New Confession of 1967 now under consideration by the UPUSA Presbyterian Church.

If a reader is concerned to know what this theology is, I know of no better book than Piper, *Protestantism in an Ecumenical Age*. Like all Piper's work, it is well done, careful, scholarly, mature, and of great interest. One does not need to be in agreement with his theological position (primarily Barthian with a more gracious nod to Bultmann and Tillich than to the fundamentalists) to get great pleasure and profit from this book. Read it for the light he sheds on what Protestantism may be or may have to be in an ecumenical age; read it for comments on Rome and Greek Orthodoxy; read it for an enthusiastic critique of the ecumenical movement by one who believes in it; and read it for trenchant criticism on much in modern Protestant church life.

One of the great gifts of the book is Piper's review of the theological work and influence of Martin Luther. One could use it here almost as a source book. His emphasis on Luther over Calvin may worry some, but he supports his position.

It is a help to some readers that the book is hardly touched with footnotes, but for the serious reader this leads to concern about some of Piper's very inclusive statements. A very strange word appears on page 179: "stinkers", which is used without quotation marks by the good, sober professor. And why was a book as important as this put out in a bright orange cover with a garish green and orange dust jacket?

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*The Modern Mission Apostolate.* Edited by William J. Richardson. Maryknoll, New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1965. x plus 302 pages plus bibliography and index. \$3.95.

Reviewed by Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Maryknoll Missioners' Conferences have been held since 1961 for the purpose of bringing their missionaries up-to-date on the work of the Maryknoll Center, acquainting them with the work of their colleagues and the world, and providing an opportunity for the exchange of ideas. *The Modern Mission Apostolate* is a symposium edited from a transcription of forty hours of lectures and the discussions of the conference held in November, 1963. Time spent between the covers of this book is like entering the doors of the Center and sitting in on the actual sessions as an invited observer.

Here is concern that the next half century become the greatest "Age of Missions" and that the Church communicate the salvific works of God. Here is the fruit of concentrated study and planning — the treatment of numerous

aspects of missions, including vocation testing and screening, catechetics, liturgy, the witness of the laity, group dynamics, mass communication, cooperatives, local support in missions, and social action. Here is candid appraisal. One priest avers that the greatest weakness of Maryknoll work lies with the clergy. The discouragement of the missionaries with respect to the number of those completing training for the priesthood on the various mission fields is somewhat mollified by the fact that even in the U. S. five out of every six who enter Catholic seminaries drop out. The habit and various rules which regulate the behavior of nuns and priests are seen as deterrents to the mission in certain instances.

The editors have not deleted the humorous lines which enliven such a conclave and preserve it from boredom. Sister Miriam Therese volunteers that the nun's confessions must be one of the banes of a priest's existence and adds that she is sure that they would not want the nuns to make them interesting! She also pleads for a sentence or two from the priest when receiving the sacrament, lest the Sisters feel as though they are in a supermarket or going to confession before an I. B. M. machine.

There is much in this book to give Protestant missiologists, missionaries, and lay clerical leaders occasion for reflection. Evangelicals will be encouraged by the emphasis on the inspired Word of God, the assertions of the meaningfulness of Scripture in terms of a concrete message and a concrete Christ, and by the generally commendatory references to Protestant virility and methodology in the mission field. At the same time they would do well to ponder the awareness of members of the Maryknoll conclave that a sound interior life must be "based on theology rather than on devotional formation," and the fact that their Catholic counterparts are giving a greatly increased attention to training future missionaries so that they will be able to communicate the Gospel and effectively build the Church in other cultures. Ecumenists who focus on unity to the exclusion of its Biblical bases should not overlook the fact that while Protestant missions are considered a part of Christian missions, this book holds out no hope of doctrinal compromise or dilution on the part of the Catholics.

We owe a vote of thanks to all who shared in the preparation and publication of this book, and we owe ourselves and our cause a careful reading of it.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF REGIONAL MEETING

### *Midwestern Section of ETS*

The Eleventh General Meeting of the Midwestern Section of the ETS will be held on the campus of the Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College and Seminary at Grand Rapids, Michigan. The date will be Friday and Saturday, April 22 - 23, 1966.

Anyone desiring to submit papers for the meeting should write to Dr. Elmer B. Smick, 12262 Conway Road, St. Louis 41, Missouri.