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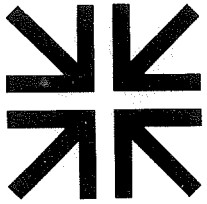
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A table of contents for *Theological Students Fellowship (TSF) Bulletin (US)* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_tsfbulletin-us.php



TSF News and Reviews

Theological Students Fellowship 233 Langdon, Madison, Wisconsin 53703 (608) 257-0263

Mark R. Branson (Los Angeles) TSF Secretary and Editor

Clark H. Pinnock (Toronto School of Theology) TSF Coordinator and *Systematic Theology*

APRIL 1978

NEWS

BERKELEY LECTURES

Segments from Mark Branson (TSF Secretary), Darrell Guder (Coordinator of Theological Education for Young Life and Thielicke's interpreter) and Professor Helmut Thielicke.

MARK BRANSON ON "ESSENTIALS OF SEMINARY EDUCATION"

I could put these concerns into three different areas, the structure is from I John: 1) Christology, 2) love among Christians and 3) righteousness. I think those same three issues define the categories that are crucial for those of us involved in the education scene.

The first one confronts the critical problem of doing theology whether you are on a secular campus or in a pluralistic seminary. . . the problem that you and I know is simply that, regardless of wherever Christ confronts or whomever he confront, one is going to be challenged. That implies as much for the theologian or the seminary student as for the peasant. Jesus keep breaking our boxes whenever we allow the Scriptures to mold our concepts and mold our Christology. . . Our systematic theology is not going to hold Him down. In dealing with liberation theology, the concern of developing a theology around one issue is confronted by some conversation Jesus has about taxes. Or, on the issue of authority, Jesus's use of the Old Testament gives us guidelines, yet we are unable to restrict his concepts to a particular framework like that advanced by the Council on Inerrancy. How do we study and do systematic theology or biblical theology while maintaining a high Christology and a Christology that is rooted in the historical Jesus? That needs to be met by broad theological discussion and by pastors or pastors-in-training who are aimed toward simply following Him.



TSF Banquet with Guder, Thielicke, Branson.

Associate Editors: Stephen T. Davis (Claremont Men's College) *Philosophy*; Robert E. Frykenberg (University of Wisconsin) *World Religions*; David W. Gill (New College, Berkeley) *Ethics*; Robert L. Hubbard (Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary) *Old Testament*; Paul A. Mickey (Duke Divinity School) *Practical Theology*; Grant Osborne (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) *New Testament*.

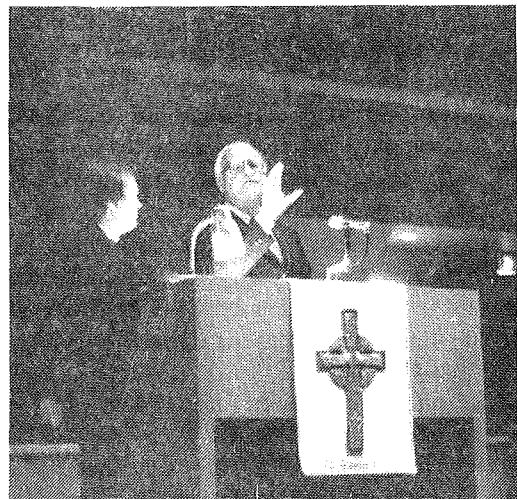
Secondly, I mentioned fellowship. Most of the people with whom I speak have their spiritually dry years during seminary. It is obvious that in this category, Catholic seminaries are far ahead of Protestants, simply because they are aware of the need for a spiritual director. There is also a need for fellowship on the campus, and TSF's concern is to work in seminaries to form such an atmosphere. The very style of the university or seminary in its competitiveness can easily lure one to sell out to the academic, elite mindset. This is contradictory to our concern for being a community of God's people together studying the Scriptures, breaking bread, continuing a devotional life and growing as Christians while we are involved in study itself. But some way or another, the study conflicts with the devotional, or the pietism gets in the way of scholarship, and it causes a tension. What we want to do is break through that. That does cost, and that does take time and it does take energy, but nonetheless the problem is real, and we need to continue to deal with it.

A third area that John brings up is, "What do you do with the truth when you get it?" John simply talks about righteousness and not sinning--which gets all of us a little bit uptight. Ethics have become just as much a category of the academic elite as theology often has, thus seldom getting down to a point of application. But again, those who follow Jesus do not allow that kind of separation, and this divorcing of intellectual pursuits from volitional obedience need not be something we tolerate. So once again, the concern is that of practical theology, the concerns of political-social-economic issues. We should pursue concepts as well as personal life-involvement in these concerns.

I commend to you these distinctives. We must take the initiative to meet John's definition of orthodoxy: Christology, fellowship and righteousness.

DARREL GOUDER: "OBSERVATIONS ON AMERICAN SEMINARY EDUCATION"

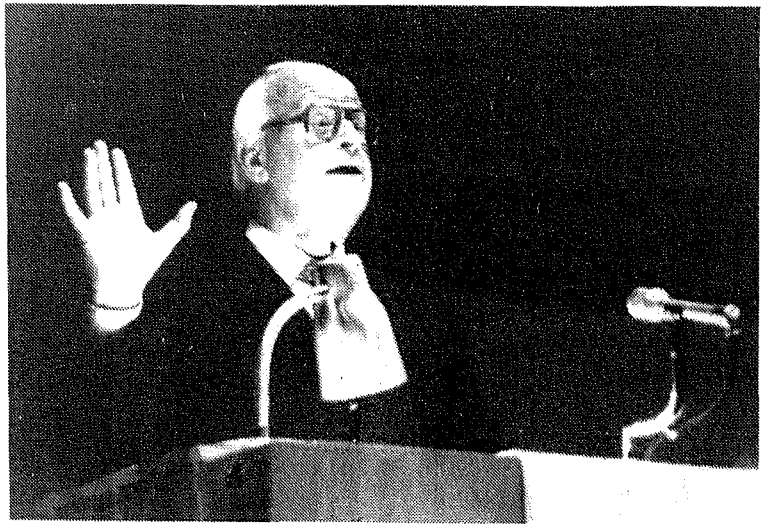
I'd like to make a few comments concerning observations made since I have returned to this country. I have a sense still that we are not very good historians in the evangelical church and that most of us do not fully understand that which is needed to grasp where we are today theologically. I will always be grateful to Professor Thielicke. The very first class which I attended in Hamburg was a series of lectures which he has taught through the years, entitled, "Faith and Thought." He conducted an ongoing dialogue with each of the major theologians since the Enlightenment. I think that encounter made me aware of how ignorant I was of all that had gone into making the questions and the answers which informed theology today. It seems to me that a great deal of the tension, the uptightness in the church and in theological education can be derived from the fact that we are not very good students of our own history. We are not aware of how old the issues are that we're battling.



Interpreter Darrel Guder with Thielicke.

We are not aware of the fact that there is almost nothing being said today that has not already been said in a multiple variety of forms. Another quote from Professor Thieliicke on this, "Theologians never solve their problems. They simply get tired of them and go onto other ones." We have good reason to be more relaxed about the theological issues if we are able to sort out how much has been historically conditioned. I think a case in point is the passionate, but often ill-advised debate on the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. I think that in this area our lack of background is horrendous, and it makes us absolutely unable to cope with some of the sweeping generalizations which are constantly made on all sides. For this reason I would warmly endorse and encourage us all to be far more careful scholars of the history of our own thinking. It's very encouraging to see work like that of Jack Rogers at Fuller pointing out how Christian theology in the 19th century has gone through a specific molding process and how we are still caught in that process. Several of my friends are working in New Testament studies and it seems to me that much of the radical New Testament work today is still on an agenda dictated by the 19th century. The presuppositions are not spoken, but they're certainly active. These hidden presuppositions are seldom brought to light.. When we get them out front, we have good reason to be more doubtful about their one hundred percent validity.

I see very often that this resistance to classroom experience on the part of the person in the practical ministry is frequently due to the fact that we have a serious divorce between the theological enterprise as one way of confessing our faith. We have a great deal to learn in the Protestant side of the church from the disciplined emphasis upon spiritual formation in the Catholic Church. We do want to avoid the spiritual traps against which Martin Luther rebelled, in thinking that spiritual formation is a way in which to earn one's salvation. Having that one fairly well sorted out, we now may be free enough to approach the task of Christian disciplines, spiritual discipline as an expression of justification by faith, rather than the means to it. I'd like to see that happening in a more concerted fashion.



Thieliicke: Smedes says, "The rumors are wrong. There are giants in the land."

On to a third observation. I'm personally very committed to the idea that Christian learning must take place within community. I'm very excited about Howard Snyder's newest book. All of us who are involved in education are aware of the degree to which we are somewhat enslaved by academic gamesmanship. It begins with the whole question of giving grades--which will be the eternal plague of all who teach.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this academic gamesmanship is when one comes across truly gifted theologians, resisting with every bit of might he or she might have, the idea that what they are doing ought to somehow be related to the rest of the work of the church. I am a great believer in good scholarship, but I do not believe that true scholarship can be defined as scholarship divorced from the ministry of the church. Therefore, learning in community and scholars in community are going to have to be among our priorities in theological education in the future.

HELMUT THIELICKE--A RESPONSE TO A QUESTION CONCERNING LIBERATION THEOLOGY

If there is very major oppression of people in an area or continent, and if that oppression is caused by a wrong system (for example, the fact that the entire wealth in a country is concentrated in a few hands whereas the rest of the population has been proletarianized and is being exploited) then it would be entirely obvious that Christian love must oppose the cause of this miserable situation. That means that the system must be the thing to hear the judgmental call of God. I think that this is the true core of liberation theology. However, it is possible that immediately a wrong course is adopted. This happens when the church not only criticizes the system and speaks to the consciences of those who have power, but when the church itself becomes the proponent of some political program. The church itself is not a political power. The church itself can never initiate a revolution. Christians can do that, but the Church as an institution cannot, because a revolution can only be legitimized by that one who is able to replace a system that is rotten and needs replacement. That could only be a state-like organization and not "the church." The church should never exhaust its resources by saying its task is political liberation. The church must also make the actual victims of such a system those for whom it does its pastoral and caring work. That would mean that the criterion for whether or not the church is acting legitimately in a crisis situation would be the following criteria: the church must always speak in a double direction; on the one hand, it must attack those who have power, those who are steering a false system, at the same time the church must comfort those who are being imposed upon or oppressed by such a system.



*Thielicke
discussing
lectures with
students.
(Associate editor
Gill at right).*

If we tried to explain this by viewing the Reformation, we could say it, as Luther only partially did, that on the one hand, he did turn to the poor and persecuted peasants and on the other hand against the princes who permitted such a wrong system persist. In other words, the Christian is always fighting on two fronts.

(NOTE: THE ENTIRE BERKELEY LECTURES SERIES "PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD TODAY: UNSOLVED PROBLEMS OF THE REFORMATION" WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWS AND REVIEWS.)

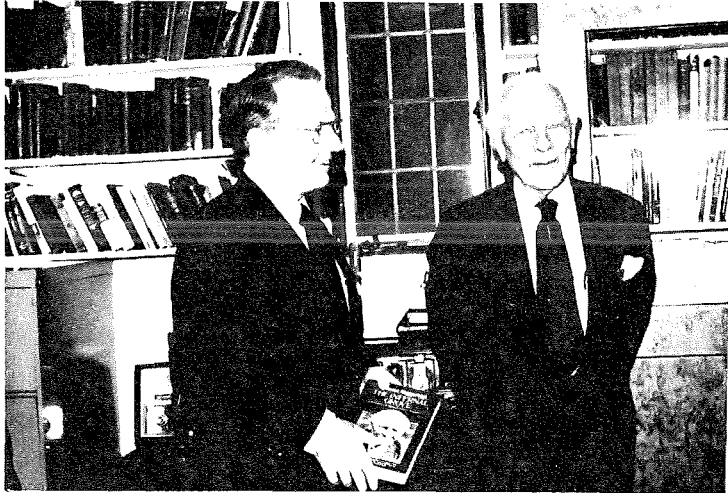
NEWS FROM DAVID JONES, TSF STAFF (SOUTHEAST REGION)

Just a few comments on what's been happening. A group has formed at Columbia this semester. Lee Wyatt was expecting about ten people for the initial organizational meeting. Twenty-five came. The second meeting equally well attended was devoted to a discussion of a pastoral letter by the Episcopal bishop in Atlanta on homosexuality, which was reprinted in Christianity Today. The discussion was excellent as this is a big issue at Columbia right now. The group there is meeting fortnightly. Bob Henderson, head of the department of Evangelism for the PCUS, is leading a Bible study in his home on Sunday nights for some people at the seminary and in the community. I met Bob at the Davidson Conference. I am giving joyful thanks to the Lord for both of these developments. Keep them in your prayers.

At Vanderbilt, John Perkins spoke in January on "Social and Economic Justice in America." In March, Dr. John McRay, Professor of Religious Studies at Middle Tennessee State University, spoke on "Christianity: Judaism Universalized." Professor McRay will be delivering a series of similar lectures at Oxford this month. On April 10, Dr. Ross Whetstone, on faculty at Scarritt College, will speak on "The Charismatic Renewal: How does the Pastor Handle the Positive Contributions and Problems of the Renewal in the Local Congregation?"

WESTWOOD (LOS ANGELES)

Sponsored by the Westwood Christian Foundation and TSF, Malcolm Muggeridge spoke to UCLA students and area friends in February. Following his lecture, "The True Crisis of Our Time," Muggeridge discussed various issues with a panel. This cross-disciplinary discussion has proven advantageous for religious studies majors at UCLA and at the University of Chicago. Westwood Christian Foundation, directed by Robert Fife, offers courses for UCLA students to complement the Inter-departmental Religious Studies major and for pre-seminarians. Accreditation is offered through several schools, including Fuller Seminary and Emmanuel School of Religion, and is sometimes transferable at the option of the student's advisor.



*Robert Fife with
Malcolm Muggeridge*

Westwood Christian Foundation has affiliate status with the American Associate of Theological Schools.

The Westwood Lectures, sponsored by WCF, will be held April 19 - 21. Dr. Byron Lambert, who earned a Ph.D. in Literature at the University of Chicago, is currently on faculty at Fairleigh Dickinson University (New Jersey). "Contemporary Molders of Christian Thought" will be the series title for these three evenings (at 7:30 p.m.) The Wednesday lecture will be on the UCLA campus and the following two evenings will be at 10808 LeConte. Information is available from Dr. Fife at (213)-477-8576.

THEOLOGY

LANGDON GILKEY OF
CHICAGO DIVINITY SCHOOL
REPLIES TO THE TSF
RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY
BY CLARK PINNOCK. WE
APPRECIATE DR. GILKEY'S
PERMISSION ALLOWING US
TO PRINT THIS LETTER.

Dear Prof. Pinnock:

My friend at the Divinity School, Donald Dayton, has just sent me the very interesting review of my work by you which appeared in TSF Research. I want to say to you that I have read it with very great appreciation and enjoyment, and want to commend you--if that is appropriate for a most fair and informed summary and evaluation of my thought. As you made clear, there are many issues in theology where we do not see eye to eye; nevertheless, I was very much impressed with the fairness with which you evaluated a scheme of thought divergent from your own and with the ability to appreciate strong points in a theology different from yours. For this I wish to thank you right away.

There was only one point at which I felt you misinterpreted my intent and thus the meaning of my written work. This was with regard to Naming the Whirlwind. I thought you understood very well what I was after in that volume except for one not unimportant point. This was that the volume was not systematic or constructive theology. In it, in the last chapter, a method for such "positive theology" was stated; but the book did not illustrate or follow out that method. I had thought I had made this point very clear: but apparently I did not. The book was a prolegomenon, writing that comes before theology in preparation for it.

Since it did not include revelation, and the response to revelation, and so did not work from the symbols of the Biblical and church traditions, it could not be theology or Christian theology. No attempt, therefore was made to state the Christian faith or even an aspect of it. We were left there, with prolegomenon, having established the meaning of religious language in general because of the presence of ultimacy in and sacrality in our experience--but quite unable to state what the Christian form of that general revelation might be.

I regard this as essentially Calvin's position--my dimension of ultimacy is phenomenological translation (perhaps way off the mark) of his sensus divinum, a sense of the divine that is given a thousand forms in man's religious and secular existence. It is this which is to be formed anew and in the right fashion by Christian revelation. The same method is followed and extended into theology in Reaping, where the sense of ultimacy in general political experience is shaped by revelation into the knowledge of God's providence as it works in our common public life. I do not know how good or useful a book Naming is. It seemed important to me at the time to write it and thus was very important in sorting out my own theology. However, I had no intention of doing theology, of stating the gospel or Christian faith in that book, and in fairness, it should not be faulted for being so lacking "in anything solid to give." I had Reaping with its Christology, Providence and eschatology already in germ in my mind when I wrote it--but such "positive theology" had no place in the first book.

I also do not think it quite accurate to call it "natural theology," at least without qualification. In a long section of Naming I showed how natural theology was impossible--at least without the assumption of revelation and the reception of it, which means it then ceases to be natural theology. The section on the proofs of God I regarded as my final argument against the possibility of natural theology. The important distinction (at least for me) between the meaning of a religious assertion and its truth also means that Naming, concerned only with the first, made no attempt to establish the second. Thus was it prolegomenon, a defense of the meaning of religious language (in general) and not a defense (prior to revelation) of its truth. The book argued that the issue of truth arises only with revelation and its reception--and so cannot be established prior to that, i.e. by a natural theology. I would say, though this is certainly not to court your approval of this view, that if I understand Schleiermacher correctly, this is his point: experience can discriminate a presence of the divine, but it cannot prove the existence of God; and he also refused all attempt at natural theology.

Liberalism is replete with natural theologies. It is also the case, however, that there were many liberal (Schleiermacher and Ritschl being the most prominent) who did not practice nor believe in natural theology. I assume that you would set the Niebuhrs and Tillich in the "liberal" camp: they then would also be examples of those who deny the possibility of natural theology.

This rejection was characteristic of my thought until Reaping. Then I found myself--quite to my surprise and against my will--discovering an argument for "God" that I found convincing and therefore undeniable. This kept me awake for several nights. In that book (chs. 5 and 12), therefore, such an argument from the structure of our temporal creaturehood is assayed. It is qualified drastically also in ch. 5: the essential distortion of finitude calls for a ground beyond itself, but the existential distortion of finitude in sin obscures both that ground and the essential structure. Thus while there is a possible "natural theology," it is obscured until through grace and faith that essential structure is again made visible. This point is perhaps made more clear--it appeared to me as I was writing Reaping and so could be clearer there--in an article on this I read at Notre Dame. I have included it if you are interested in this in this point. (Now available from TSF Research--see order list).

I am sure that from your vantage point you are correct in calling me a liberal--and I have no objection to that label at all. From my own understanding I remain firmly a neo-orthodox--as I think Reaping indicates clearly. There creation ex nihilo, the fall, revelation, incarnation, justification and sanctification and finally eschatology are the major symbolic framework for the theology, a battery of symbols characteristic not at all of liberalism. And, except possibly for the temporality of God in one of his aspects, these symbols are, as far as I can

see, interpreted in no vastly different form than was characteristic of most of that school of theology--Barth of course always excepted.

As the above indicates, I do not myself understand my thought as having changed as much as your review implies--though I know we do not know ourselves very much better than others know us! I recognize, of course, that the view of the "how" of revelation has changed; the somewhat undigested "encounter" model, largely from Brunner, I adopted in Maker, and the assumption I know what I meant by a "mighty act" have been shifted about considerably into another understanding of revelation, its relation to events and to our reception of them. I still, however, regard the category of revelation as utterly central to either the knowledge of God or of ourselves, and that in both cases it is in and through special revelation centering in Christ, that this knowledge is gained; I would assume that Reaping made all that quite clear; at least I meant it to. Thus, while the sections on revelation in both of the two earlier books would not be amended, and the concept of the presence of God throughout experience and culture vastly enlarged, there is I think, no other point with regard to God, sin, incarnation or eschatology where my views would differ greatly. Much of these views were not formed at all in the earlier books, either in my mind or in print, but they are not vastly different than what was implicit there--at least so it seems to me.

Cordially yours,
Langdon Gilkey

THEOLOGY

FUNDAMENTALISM

BY JAMES BARR
SCM AND WESTMINSTER, 1977
REVIEWED BY CLARK PINNOCK,
TSF COORDINATOR

James Barr is a notable OT scholar who is so upset about conservative evangelicalism, as we prefer to call it, that he has taken a good deal of time out to write a long book denouncing it. Although I believe Professor Barr fails to give sufficient credit to the good aspects of conservative Protestantism, I must admit that he is generally on target, registering criticisms that deserve careful soul searching on our part. The result of our giving Barr a fair hearing should be an increase in our ability to be self-critical--something we have found very difficult in the past. I am personally grateful to him for helping me understand my own tradition better, even though I wince under some of his cruel lashing.

Barr is most devastating where he is most expert and we are most sensitive--on the issue of biblical authority. From reading his other books on the subject I know he has little positive to offer us in place of our conservative view of the Bible, but that does not make his criticisms of our efforts in biblical studies any easier to bear. Basically he accuses the whole body of evangelical biblical scholarship of dishonesty in its defense of biblical inerrancy, while objecting to any attempt to rid ourselves of the concept on the part of progressive evangelicals. "Damned if you do, damned if you don't!" He devotes a full third of the book to this theme. He observes, with abundant illustrations (you cannot say he has not read our literature), that

evangelicals will do anything exegetically that will produce the apparent effect of an inerrant Bible. If it takes a far-fetched non-literal interpretation to achieve it, let it be so. He argues that inerrancy and not literalness is the hallmark of evangelical exegesis, a new and shocking point to me, but one which I cannot really deny in the light of his evidence. We have engaged in an extraordinary amount of devious reasoning to save the inerrancy assumption without even being aware we were being devious. I think the effect of Barr's extensive discussion of evangelical exegetical work on an open minded evangelical reader will be to convince him or her of the burden and liability represented by the inerrancy assumption in so much evangelical thinking. Of course I know how this observation goes against the tide of aggressive inerrancy thinking in evangelicalism today. Nevertheless, I do not expect to be proven wrong. Whatever preachers and popularisers say, I do not expect any return to the strict inerrancy assumption on the part of informed biblical scholarship. On the other hand, I would fault Barr for not recognizing there is another way for evangelicals to go, in the direction of nuanced or non-inerrancy positions on Scripture which are nonetheless high and forceful, in contrast to his own.

Barr surprised me on another point too. I had not reflected before on the ambivalent position often taken by evangelicals on miracles and the supernatural. We have all read countless diatribes against those unconscionable liberals who reduce through demythologization or rationalization of supernaturalism in Scripture. But have we noticed to the degree to which we practice the same arts? Of course we are not anti-supernaturalists when we

trace the plagues of Egypt to an unusually high Nile inundation that year or explain Joshua's crossing of Jordan to a natural blockage of the river upstream at just the right moment, or relate Matthew's star to a mere comet. I think the value of what Barr is doing here is to rub our noses in what we ourselves have said, and to force us to look at it critically. I am grateful to him for making me do so, and will take careful note. On the other hand there is nothing that he says to make me want to follow his own position whatever it is. His negative criticisms are much better than his positive commitments.

What sticks in Barr's craw I think is the arrogant set-apartness he sees in us, the way we stick together and look down our noses at those inferior conciliar Christians out there. He is annoyed by our smugness, by our refusal to come clean and admit we have some growing and learning to do too. He dislikes the way we write people off and label them without having bothered to listen to them first. Of course you could say he does not appreciate fully the Reformation roots we have, how our biblical piety has a lot to do with John Calvin and John Wesley, and does not do justice to our best scholars like F.F. Bruce and G.C. Berkouwer who are not hung up on the issues he labours in such a wordy manner. But nevertheless, in Barr's favour, let me say that evangelicals are not without the faults he acutely identifies, that Barr has not slandered us as a group, that things are often every bit as bad as he says, sometimes worse, and that his brotherly concern to correct us is not lost on this reader. Barr is required reading for TSF members. Take a deep breath before you start.

THE RESILIENT CHURCH

BY AVERY DULLES
DOUBLEDAY & CO., 1977
REVIEWED BY CLARK PINNOCK
TSF COORDINATOR

American theology is ablaze with controversy. In November we were treated to an unheard of spectacle in the pages of the Christian Century of two leading theologians hurling anathemas at one another in a debate over heresy. Avery Dulles S.J. had written a fine book on the necessity and limits of adaptation and dared to mention some names of those he feels have gone too far in compromising the faith. This was more than Langdon Gilkey could take, since he was named, so he penned a spirited four page defense of his own orthodoxy (sic). Consult the Christian Century November 9 for Gilkey's self-defense and November 16 for Dulles' reply. It's a debate no evangelical can afford to miss, because it deals with the central issues of truth and authority so important to us.

Well, what about the book was it that made Gilkey so angry? I'd make it TSF book of the month, if I could. It's a good substitute for evangelical theology since we have so little of that to review. Basically he calls us back to the historic themes of the Gospel. It's good to have social concerns, for example, but let's not throw out the hope of everlasting life and need of repentance and faith. Of course we need to respond creatively to the cultural setting we find ourselves in, but don't go overboard and accommodate God's truth to the Zeitgeist. What got Gilkey's goat was chapter four on modernity and the Hartford Appeal. Aha, says Gilkey, I knew it was just a matter of time before someone would wield those conservative declarations

in the rooting out of heresies in American theology. Enter inquisitor Dulles (Catholic yet!) armed with his sword, keen to slay the wicked liberals with their 'false and debilitating themes.' Well, why not? We evangelicals have been stewing for years about the humanising of the Gospel that has been going on in divinity colleges and nobody listened to us. Maybe they'll listen to Dulles. (After all, he's related to John Foster!) I hope they will. We need renewal without the loss of biblical identity. We need creative theology without any compromise of the stewardship of the Gospel once for all delivered to the saints. Bravo, Dulles, lead on!

NEW TESTAMENT

PAUL AND PALESTINIAN JUDAISM

BY E.P. SANDERS
PHILADELPHIA: FORTRESS PRESS, 1977.
REVIEWED BY GRANT R. OSBORNE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT AT TRINITY EVANGELICAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

As with his earlier work, The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition, this present work will be the subject of a vigorous debate for years to come. It is a landmark work, both for the comprehensiveness of its treatment and the importance of its subject. Sanders' purpose is to establish as objectively as possible the religious characteristics of both Palestinian Judaism and Paul, then to note similarities and differences in an attempt to establish the Gattung of Paul's thought.

The first half of the work (398 pages) studies Palestinian Jewish literature from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. Sanders begins with the Tannaitic literature; though it is later than the other works, he believes it is more important in establishing the rabbinic mind-set (because the others stem from the most part from non-conformist Judaism). In his study he proceeds thematically from election and the covenant to obedience/disobedience, reward/punishment, salvation, ethics, the Gentiles and religious experience in general. Next he studies similar themes in the Dead Sea Scrolls and then the apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.

Finally, he summarizes his results. Contrary to current opinion, he maintains that the relationship between the covenant and the law had not degenerated into legalism by the first century. Observance of the law (obedience) was still regarded as the fulfillment of covenant obligations, and this was still based on the mercy of God (election) rather than the works of man resulting in salvation (Sanders calls this "covenantal nomism"). Although the strata of literature differed in details, this comprises the common theme uniting all, even Qumran and apocalyptic literature.

The second half (112 pages) studies Pauline emphases, especially his soteriology and approach to the law. Sanders regards two foci as central to Paul's thought: 1) the lordship of Christ, extended to all who believe and encompassing both eschatology (salvation-history) and soteriology; and 2) his mission to the Gentiles. Paul's soteriology is exclusivistic, centering only on Christ and maintains a balance (as does Judaism between pre-destination and individual

faith-decision. Moreover, the universal solution precedes the universal plight in Paul's thought, and so the purpose of the law was merely to point man to salvation by pointing out his sin. This means that Paul's main interest is not juristic but participatory, i.e., being "in Christ" has precedence over "being declared righteous." As such, Paul's views transcend "covenantal nomism," although his balance between judgment "on the basis of deeds and salvation" by God's gracious election" is rabbinic.

Sanders concludes that, "Paul represents an essentially different type of religiousness from any found in Palestinian Jewish literature." However, he is careful to note that Paul's system of thought no more be traced to Hellenism or Hellenistic Judaism either. Rather, it stems from the interaction between the implications of the lordship of Christ for his Jewish background.

In conclusion, this reviewer must admit to a strong respect for Sanders' work here. It has dealt honestly and thoroughly with extremely difficult issues, and the conclusions will create a sensation in the world of scholarship, especially since they go against most recent German scholarship. To be sure, there are many areas where there is room for debate--a tendency to somewhat oversimplify agreements between the complex and different facets of Judaism, a somewhat cursory overview of Paul's thought, and a too hasty denial of Hellenistic parallels. Nevertheless, this work is almost certain to replace Davies' Paul and Rabbinic Judaism at the apex of Pauline studies.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

BY ROBERT H. MOUNCE
EERDMANS, 1977.

REVIEWED BY DOUGLAS J. MOO, INSTRUCTOR IN NEW TESTAMENT AT TRINITY EVANGELICAL DIVINITY SCHOOL AND IS COMPLETING PH.D. AT ST. ANDREWS.

"The Apocalypse of John has as many secrets as words," wrote Jerome, a sentiment echoed by most exegetes who have attempted the Herculean task of commenting on Revelation. Interpreting the often obscure symbolism in which John couches his message is an acid-test for the expositor--a test which Robert Mounce passes in fine form.

Recognizing that Revelation is an example of apocalyptic literature (though with differences), Mounce refuses to press the details found in John's visions, but also avoids the tendency to evaporate the imagery of its historical, though future, referent.

This balance is evidenced in Mounce's approach to other crucial, and often divisive issues. Structurally, he views the series of seals, trumpets and bowls neither as chronological nor recapitulative, but as progressively concentrated on the time immediately preceding the end. While taking a pre-millennial approach to 20:1-6, he admits that other interpretations are possible and introduces a twist into the usual pre-millennial interpretation of these verses by restricting the thousand year reign to the martyrs of v. 4 and suggesting that the essential meaning of the millennium "may be realized in something other than a temporal fulfillment." (p. 359). The church he understands as present on earth throughout the period of distress, but refreshingly refrains from polemic with those who would disagree.

Throughout the book, Mounce demonstrates a thorough acquaintance with the primary and secondary literature relating to Revelation, and the consistent endeavor to interpret the Revelation against its geographical, social and historical background, without denying the futuristic fulfillment, is one of the strongest features of the commentary. The commentary is not, of course, on the Greek text, but the footnotes often (though not as often as one could wish) include discussion of Greek constructions. If there are any disappointments, the introduction would have to be sighted. Too brief for the complexity of the issues involved, no discussion of the theology of the book is found, and many valuable comments on structure and interpretation, scattered throughout the commentary, could more profitably have been included in the introduction.

The student interested in Revelation has been blessed with four good commentaries, taking a conservative approach, in the last decade: those by Leon Morris (Tyndale, 1969) G.E. Ladd (Eerdmans, 1972), G.R. Bunsley-Murray (Olipants, 1974) and R.H. Mounce. Of these, Mounce's is certainly the fullest and may very well be the best.

OLD TESTAMENT

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE LITERARY CRITIC

BY DAVID ROBERTSON
FORTRESS PRESS, 1977.
REVIEWED BY ROBERT
HUBBARD, ASSOC. EDITOR.
& PAMELA HUBBARD.

To the many hermenetical tools already on the Bible student's table, David Robertson's addition to the Guides to Biblical Scholarship Old Testament Series suggests the method of literary criticism. By this he means not what OT students have long known as "source criticism" but rather a

method of studying the Bible as a compendium of literature much as one would study Chaucer or Euripides.

Robertson carefully states his methodological assumptions, frankly admitting them to be arbitrarily chosen (p. 4): 1) the Bible must be treated only as imaginative literature (i.e. with no historical or theological purpose); 2) literature is metaphoric (i.e., a hypothetical world removed from reality to which historical background is irrelevant); 3) genres of different literatures which use similar literary devices may be compared; 4) in such comparisons there is no one right interpretation but only the clarification of different interpretations; 5) the object of literary criticism is not to substantiate truth but to demonstrate the beauty or clumsiness of literature; 6) literary criticism aims at highlighting the attitudes helpful to meaningful life which the literature being examined stresses.

Some critique is in order here. No objection can be raised to some of Robertson's emphases (i.e., on the comparative method, on assuming the unity of a passage, on testing the adequacy of a piece's parts within the unity). But Robertson demands too much of the evangelical student in other respects: he asks him to set aside any commitment to the Bible's purpose (#1), its authority to critique other literature (#4), and its claim to reveal ultimate truth (#5). The very arbitrariness of Robertson's assumptions show that they are an expression of his own world-view and not essential for the practice of literary criticism per se.

The majority of the book demonstrates how the method works. First, Robertson compares the plot lines of Exodus 1-15 with Euripides' The Bacchae. One fascinating result emerges: he

says Exodus 1-15 portrays the gradual capitulation of Pharaoh to Yaweh in a contest between the two. However, in saying that the book intentionally excludes irony or ambiguity to retain reader sympathy, Robertson overlooks the obvious irony that Pharaoh himself unwittingly raises and trains Moses, the very hero who defeats him! This omission, of course, undermines conclusion concerning the relative value of each piece: he calls The Bacchae "adult" (i.e., tolerant of ambiguities and irony) but Exodus "child-like" (i.e., describing a black-and-white world).

A masterful step-by-step analysis of Job's confrontations with his "friends" follows and yields two fascinating insights: 1) that Satan takes upon himself a curse which can only be annulled if Job fails the test (unfortunately, the evidence is weak here); 2) that during the course of the book God subtly replaces Job as the defendant on trial. In the end, says Robertson, the whole story confirms Job's contention that God is unjust, thus offering "fairy tale comfort ... to a man in real pain" (p. 54). Again Robertson misses something--the blindness of his own world view?--in overlooking the graciousness and restoration of God in the last chapter.

Adept in many genres, Robertson next compares Shelly's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" with Psalm 90, again suggesting a new insight: he sees that there is a function in the very repetition of the "aesthetically-ordered works," namely, to produce "a corresponding order in the self" (p. 67) in the face of adversity. Though one may disagree with Robertson's interpretation that Psalm 90 is not directed toward God as the source of consolation, one may grant that Robertson has captured a profound, perhaps psychological dimension underlying the use of cultic psalms.

This is a stimulating book, although not in the way the author intended. On the one hand, Robertson ably shows the fascinating insights which literary criticism can yield; the method does deserve a place in Biblical studies. On the other hand, the book is stimulating in that Robertson exemplifies the inability of the secular mind to understand a transcendent, sovereign God whose world is ultimately black-and-white. Because of the assumptions spawned by that world-view, however, this reviewer finds that the whole-hearted adoption of Robertson's method carries too heavy a price tag for the evangelical. Less expensive theologically, but just as insightful is Leland Ryken's Literature of the Bible (Zondervan, 1974). The reviewer suggests that this latter book be used along with Robertson's for a balanced approach to the worthy practice of literary criticism.

Robertson's final chapter, "Prophets and Poets," shows how the method can handle theological works. Motivated by the failure of the prophets' oracles of hope to come true, a striking development gradually emerges in Robertson's view: as the distinction between the person and his office collapsed, as the prophet gradually becomes united with the word (i.e. Ezekial eats it whereas Isaiah only heard it), eventually the word comes to equal the event (i.e., in the Suffering Servant, Jesus' incarnation)--something not so since Genesis 1. But Robertson goes further: the process continues in Western literature climaxes in modern poets like Allen Ginsver--the modern suffering servant. Obviously the uniqueness of Jesus is not taken into account.

OTHER NOTABLE BOOK REVIEWS

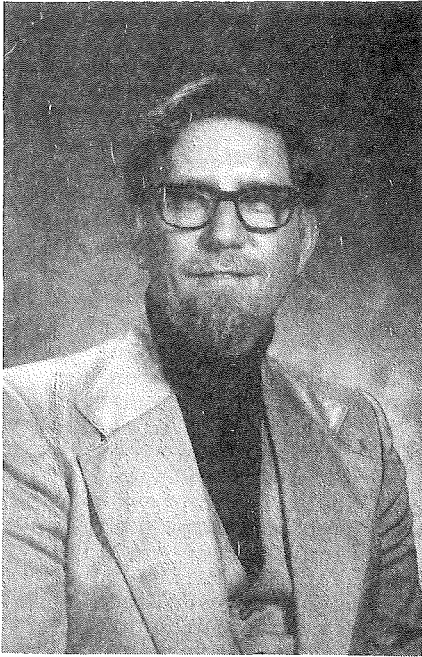
In the last issue of TSF News and Reviews, the recent book by Gerhard Maier entitled The End of the Historical-Critical Method was reviewed. A helpful review, particularly in the biographical data presented about the author, appeared recently in Christianity Today Vol. 22, No. 7, January 13, 1978, p. 38f. That review supplements the one presented here.

Two recently published commentaries in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament series, Peter Craigie's work on The Book of Deuteronomy and Leslie Allen's treatment of The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah (both published by Eerdmans, 1976), have established themselves among evangelicals as valuable contributions to the understanding of the Old Testament. Now an "outsider," Professor John Bright of Union Seminary in Virginia, reviews both with the praise that "we have here conservatism at its best" in Interpretation 32 (1978), p. 86ff. "Both these commentaries," Bright concludes, "may be commended, even (especially?) to those of contrary opinion, as excellent works of their kind." Bright's review, hence, may be consulted by our readers interested in the above two commentaries.

MISSIONS

JOURNALS

GOSPEL IN CONTEXT: A DIALOGUE ON CONTEXTUALIZATION, January, 1978 (Premiere Issue). Reviewed by Mark Branson, News and Reviews Editor.



Charles Tabor,
Editor of *The
Gospel in Context*

What may be one of the most creative and promising journals has begun publishing. Dr. Charles Tabor, an anthropologist (Ph.D. from Hartford), a professor (Milligan College and Emmanuel School of Religion), and a former missionary (Africa) is the industrious editor of this new affair. In his major article, "Is There More Than One Way to Do Theology," Tabor writes: "Confusing theology with God is one form of idolatry. Failure to recognize the cultural relativity of theology also leads to many problems when the effort is made to transpose a theology from one cultural setting to another. The fact that the Subject of theology is supernatural-absolute-ultimate does not give these properties either to the process or to the findings of theology, any more than mere talk about jokes is itself humorous. . . . However, there is in some circles

a considerable reluctance to accept the full implications of the cultural conditioning of theology. It is sometimes objected that this approach undermines the basic integrity and truth of the enterprise, that it denigrates propositional theology, and the like. But to relativize is not to destroy, it is only to spell out the fact that there are after all limits on what human beings can do, even on the basis of inspired Scriptures. So for the bulk of this paper I will offer a number of comments, which I take to be sound from the perspective of my disciplines, and which impinge in one way or another on the doing of theology." From there, Tabor deals with (1) the priority of faith over theology, (2) the nature of communication as being culture-bound, (3) the grounding of Western theology in philosophy and law, (4) the potential for alternate forms of theology, (5) and a view of the Bible as seldom a propositional revelation. In this fifth area, Tabor advances that Bible majors on three types of materials: "(a) concrete information about persons and events, most importantly the 'mighty acts of God'; (b) poetic-lyrical-metaphoric passages expressing the responses of people to their encounter with God; and (c) commands and instructions." Next (6) Tabor specifies a two-way hermeneutical task: "the human meditator of the message must understand the Scripture itself and translate it into appropriate terms in the receptor culture, and also understand the culture (a hermeneutical task) and translate it back into categories which he can compare with Scripture." The question of "whose hermeneutic is orthodox?" (7) deals with interpretation within the Bible itself and with the wider question of

modern cultural distinctives, which leads to (8) the differences between the theologies of the lay people, that of the clergy and that of the professors. Finally, (10) the issues of 'third world theologies' face the inevitable problem of Western influence.

No less than twenty-eight solicited comments are printed along with a response from Tabor. Bergquist (Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio) believes early faith was more than a personal encounter with Jesus, it was an encounter with God's salvation-history. He also wants to view the nature of biblical language as broader than the three-fold outline of Tabor's. Bonilla (Costa Rica) challenges the focus of theology as knowledge and accents the place of action. Buswell (Wheaton) differentiates between contextualization for theology and contextualization for evangelism. Carl Henry parts with Tabor on the former's emphasis on the normativeness of the biblical interpretation of God's acts. Padilla (Argentina) calls Tabor to not only be aware of the problem of "Western theological absolutism" but also of "western anthropological relativism." Other responses include those from Bartych (Tuebingen), Bediako (Ghana), Peter Davids (Pittsburg), Leeuw (Holland), Mouw (Grand Rapids) and Rogers (Pasadena).

The editorial committee lists Stephen Knapp, Padilla, Pannell and Savage among others. I hope the format continues to be one of "international, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary and interdenominational dialogue." The subscription rate is \$11 one year/\$17/two years (students \$7.50 per year) which can be sent to 1564 Edge Hill Road, Abingdon, PA 19001.



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BY J.A. THOMPSON

Thompson is concerned to trace the importance of Near Eastern treaties for Old Testament studies. He finds that they illuminate numerous aspects of the literary types, vocabulary and imagery throughout the Scriptures. The data also tends to confirm the authenticity and antiquity of the biblical documents. (37 pp)

209

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE TO NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH

BY R.T. FRANCE.

This guide by the editor of *Themelios* is specifically prepared for the research student and does not duplicate Thiselton. It could be a printed course in library research methods for the advanced student of the New Testament. It goes into lexical aids, text criticism, papyrology, the targums, grammars, periodicals, and the like. (45 pp)

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ESCHATOLOGY AND THE PARABLES

BY I.H. MARSHALL

Marshall is fast becoming one of the top-flight New Testament scholars. Since this title appeared, he has given us several works on Christology, a major study on perseverance, and watch for his forthcoming commentary on Luke. In study Marshall comes to the defense of the integrity of the Gospel parables and argues their authenticity in their original setting.

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THE MEANING OF THE WORD "BLOOD" IN SCRIPTURE

BY A.M. STIBBS

Like Leon Morris, Stibbs disagrees with those who interpret the blood of Christ as signifying new life released through death and now available for us, and advocates the view that blood refers to the death of Jesus in its redemptive significance. Through his death and the shedding of his blood, Jesus has reconciled us to God, cleansing us and putting away all our sins. (32 pp)

212-4

A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE GOSPELS.

BY GERNAIS ANGEL.

These three lectures were given at the TSF Conference in England. Angel is Dean of Studies at Trinity College, Bristol. In dealing with issues of gospel criticism, he covers "History and the Gospels," "Principles of Interpretation of the Gospels" and "The Relationship between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel." Finally, he deals with specific problems encountered by "conservatives" who working with "liberal" faculties. (24 pp)

203

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES AND THE MIND OF PAUL

BY DONALD GUTHRIE

In this work Guthrie, author of the standard and definitive *New Testament Introduction*, addresses the various issues that bear on the question of Pauline authorship of the Pastorals: vocabulary, style, theology, and unity. He seeks to show that Pauline authorship, although not without difficulties, is reasonable, and that we should treat them as true products of the mind of Paul. (44 pp.)

211

OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY SURVEY.

BY JOHN GOLDINGAY (UPDATED AND EDITED BY MARK BRANSON AND ROBERT HUBBARD)

The aim of this booklet is to survey and comment on the best resources available in English for understanding the theological significance of the Old Testament. It has in mind the average student in seminary or religion department rather than the research scholar. After explaining the functions of a commentary, it goes on to describe and evaluate one-volume commentaries and series. After that it examines commentaries on each and every Old Testament book, providing brief but highly illuminating remarks on each. It closes with a presentation of the "best buys". Anyone concerned to preach and teach the Old Testament will find this useful, perhaps indispensable. (50 pp.)

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SCRIPTURE AND MYTH

BY P.E. HUGHES

This valuable monograph is an examination of Bultmann's plea for demythologization. It exposes the naturalistic mindset his work displays and how he conforms the gospel to an anthropocentric worldview. Hughes himself calls for a theology in which the Word of God is determinative, and man is summoned to noetic and holistic conversion. (30 pp)

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The monograph examines the speeches in the first ten chapters of Acts attributed to the Apostle Peter, containing the first theological reflections on the resurrection of Jesus. He finds them to be historically authentic, truly representing the theology of the Jerusalem church, and to contain important and fundamental New Testament theology.



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