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# American Theological Journals

BY THE REV. F. W. DILLISTONE, D.D.

WHAT are one's first impressions as one glances around the periodical shelves in an American theological library? First and foremost, I think, there comes the sense of quantity and bulk and excellence of production. There is now no serious paper shortage and magazine production in this country has been developed into a fine art. Secondly, one can hardly fail to be impressed by the quantity and quality of the Roman Catholic periodicals which are available. Here is the New Scholasticism specializing in plutosophical studies, *Ora te Fratres*, concerned with the liturgical movement; here, too, are the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and the *Catholic Historical Review*, each presenting scholarly articles in its particular field. Then there are the *Modern Schoolman* and *Theological Studies* produced by the Jesuits, *The Thomist* by the Dominicans, *Franciscan Studies* by the Franciscans, together with the *American Ecclesiastical Review* for the ordinary clergyman; and numerous lesser periodicals such as *Catholic Action* of a more popular character. That powerful intellectual forces are at work in the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.A. there can be little doubt.

To turn to the Protestant periodicals, it is interesting first to notice how many are produced by individual seminaries. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Westminster, Dallas, Crozier—each is able to send out a magazine comparable in size to the *Church Quarterly Review*. They may draw on outsiders for particular articles but the main work is done within the individual seminary. However, the more influential magazines are those which deliberately seek to make a wider appeal, and it is about them that I shall seek to write in this brief descriptive account.

*Theology To-day*, with its headquarters at Princeton, would be regarded by some as the main organ of American Neo-Orthodoxy, by others, perhaps, as the chief theological magazine coming from the Presbyterian Church. I do not think it can be precisely labelled. It has tried to maintain a real ecumenicity of outlook both in its editorial policy and through its contributors. For instance, recent notable articles have been by Brunner on the doctrine of the Church, by Visser 't Hooft on the Kingship of Christ (actually one of his Stone Lectures which have just appeared in printed form), by Canon Cyril Hudson on the problem of Power, and by Otto Piper on Theology in the Ecumenical Age. During the year 1948 special articles are being devoted to the Doctrines of the Church and the Ministry, and I believe that Evangelicals in England would find this periodical of real value in keeping them in touch with some of the best theological thinking, not only in the U.S.A. but also in Europe.

*Religion in Life* bears upon it more of the stamp, perhaps, of the Methodist Church, though again its contributors are drawn from many communions. It attempts to serve the needs of the preacher

more directly and normally carries a widely-varied collection of articles. Every number contains a useful review of the quarter's fiction in which the attempt is made to make an appraisal from a religious point of view. Looking over recent numbers I find attention given to practical ministerial problems, to the relation of Christianity to literature, to such phenomena as Spiritism and psychical research, to religion in the College, and so on. In the most recent number there is a rather fascinating article by one of the most famous of America's Biblical scholars, E. J. Goodspeed (described in the list of contributors by a title which to English eyes is somewhat startling: "Ernest D. Burton Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus, Biblical and Patristic Greek, University of Chicago") in which he examines again the opening verses of Genesis i. He regards it as altogether unlikely that the Hebrews would have spoken of God creating something which was formless and chaotic: further he thinks that the translation "mighty wind" is far more plausible than "spirit." So he gives this translation:

"When God began to create the heavens and the earth, when the earth was formless and void, and darkness covered the deep, and a fearful wind was raging over the face of the waters, then God said:

'Let there be light!'

and there was light." And he comments:

"This is the noble sentence with which Genesis begins, and it strikes the keynote of the Bible."

*The Harvard Theological Review* has a well-established reputation for printing only articles of first-class scholarship, though it tends to be rather 'high-brow' and makes its appeal to a very limited circle. H. H. Rowley has a recent article on the Marriage of Ruth, and David Daube of Cambridge contributes a paper originally read in Professor Dodd's Seminar. It considers the New Testament use of *κερδαίνω* (1 Cor ix. 19-22; 1 Pet. iii. 1; Matt. xviii. 15) as a missionary term, and concludes that it was not simply given this connotation by the Christians but that it already was used in this sense within Rabbinic circles. Those interested in liturgical problems might do well to consult an article in the April, 1947, number on the so-called *Epiclesis* in Hippolytus, together with another in the July, 1946, number of the *Anglican Theological Review* on the Origins of the *Epiclesis*. Both articles are by Cyril C. Richardson of Union Theological Seminary.

*The Anglican Theological Review* is not as well known in England as it should be. It is the only quarterly in America which is predominantly Anglican in its outlook and indeed I presume it is the only quarterly in the world which attempts to deal with specifically Anglican problems and emphasizes outside the context of the Church of England. It is edited by two of the best-known scholars of the Episcopal Church—Frederick C. Grant and Burton Scott Easton—and in its own words "it seeks to interpret the Anglican tradition and outlook in theology, a tradition and an outlook which combine wide freedom with firm conviction, comprehension with Catholicity, broad sympathy and understanding with a basic loyalty to the Christian faith 'as this Church hath received the same'."

There is no article written during the past year which I would single out for special mention, but those interested in textual criticism might like to know of the high praise which Dr. Grant bestows upon the *Novi Testamenti Biblia Graeca et Latina* by Joseph M. Bover, S.J., published in Madrid in 1943. Dr. Grant speaks of this "beautifully printed, scientifically edited" work as being a real addition to our stock of tools for the textual criticism of the New Testament. "Best of all," he says, "it is heartening evidence of the vitality of biblical studies in the Spanish Church. In fact, biblical study is much more widely pursued in Roman Catholic circles at the present day than most of us realize."

*Interpretation* is a new review which has just completed the first year of its life. A good deal of discussion had taken place about the possibility of launching a magazine which would provide an expression of and a stimulus for the new interest in biblical theology which was appearing in different quarters. Finally a group of scholars in the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, in collaboration with other representative Biblical scholars and theologians, produced a quarterly which in its format is one of the most attractive of all the Protestant periodicals. During the first year it has run a series on Implements of Interpretation—Concordances, New Testament Lexicons, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias, Grammars of the Greek New Testament: another series on Books—"New Testament Literature in 1946", "Ten Years with Books in Biblical Theology", and so on. Usually each issue carries one sermon of an exegetical kind and one stiff doctrinal article. The Editors have called on Rowley, Snaith, Gossip and Phythian-Adams among British scholars. In fact, it might be claimed that the main articles dealing with principles of interpretation have come from across the water. Looking into 1948 the Editors propose to deal in turn with the theology of the Historical, Prophetic, Devotional and Apocalyptic books of the Bible. It is an ambitious programme and the outcome will be watched with interest. Certainly in the numbers so far produced there has been a store of valuable material for the Biblical and theological student.

Another journal which has only recently come into prominence is the *Journal of Religious Thought*. Produced bi-annually by the Theological Faculty of Howard University, the Negro University in Washington, the magazine is seeking in each issue to make a serious contribution to some current religious issue. The Autumn number of 1946 dealt with the weaknesses and resources of the Christian Church, enlisting the services of Richard Niebuhr for an article on the Norm of the Church, Theodore Wedel for one on the Anglican view of the concept of the Church, and E. E. Aubrey for a striking treatment of the Salvation of the Church. One small section of the last-named article is worth quoting. "The church will be saved also in so far as it recaptures the Bible without falling into bibliolatry. Not a worship of the letter of the Bible but a profound grasping of its struggle and its spirit and of the God who speaks through it will bring the Church back to the sources of its own power in the power of God." The Spring number of 1947 grappled with the vitally important subject of the transmission of the Faith and was specially notable for an article by