

On the contrary, as the whole of the Old Testament shows, it is the greatest possible stimulus to such interpretation. To assert that "I will be there as HE who I there will be" is the true meaning of the divine assurance to Moses is not to deny the Real Presence. On the contrary it is the only guarantee of that Presence, for it is grounded not in any rite or formula of man but in the declared promise and will of God Himself. In Buber's words, we cannot conjure Him and we do not need to. We can rely on Him and that is the very essence of faith, both in the Old Testament and the New.

Notes on Recent Biblical Literature

BY THE REV. W. LEATHEM, B.A.

ON putting together these random notes on some recent biblical literature, the writer's aim has been to offer a little guidance to those who are called to teach the Scriptures and preach the Gospel. It comes at a time when most clergymen may reasonably expect to be the recipients of a few book tokens from understanding and generous-hearted parishioners. How rich would be the latter's reward if, through their far-seeing kindness, their vicar's preaching took on a new freshness in the coming year!

Because of the particular aim the choice has been limited to 'middle-weights', and furthermore, to those which should prove immediately helpful; that is, such as would come readily as grist to the preacher's mill. It has also been suggested that the emphasis should lie in the direction of the New Testament. Because of this request the writer's perverseness (a national trait, he hopes, rather than personal fault) leads him to start off with a couple of books inclusive of the Old as well as the New. Leaving aside questions of literary and historical criticism (and occasional theological lapses) let me heartily commend *The Theological Word Book of the Bible* (S.C.M. Press, 25/-), and recommend it, not only because of its achievement but also because of its idealism. Here is a volume which, in design, is that which every hard-working minister of the Gospel with limited means and gifts has been dreaming about. If we suggest that fulfilment has not *quite* reached promise this is no censure but high praise. Truly it is the preacher's *Vade Mecum*, for even when he may disagree with it, it points the direction towards a more excellent way. The defining word in the title is "theological". The work is concerned supremely with the essence, or inner core, of revelation itself, and either not at all, or scarcely, with matters of history, geography, archaeology, etc. A hard-worked vicar, or an inexperienced curate, with this as his possession, and making diligent use of it, may look forward with new confidence to the task of expounding "the whole counsel of God". A word of appeal to those who are of the same school of thought as the writer: don't be put off by the worthy editor's pet pastime, the knocking down

of a straw man in the form of a crude type of biblical inspiration, hardly known outside his own hard thinking! He has much to teach us which we dare not miss.

More restricted in scope, but eminently rich in detail is C. Ryder Smith's *The Bible Doctrine of Man* (Epworth Press, 18/6). The index, containing approximately 4,000 Scripture references, gives some indication of the author's application to the task of unfolding the meaning of the Bible, whilst a complete absence of "authorities quoted" is also a refreshing change when the writer himself is of such vast competence. Among many admirable qualities we would seize on two as indicative of the character of the whole. The first is the emphasis on the *essential oneness* of the biblical testimony. Dr. Smith recognizes that we cannot remain satisfied with such biblical theologies as offer us a range of discordant (or at least unharmonized) notes. The essential discovery in the Scriptures is the Word of God, not the variety of human voices which utter it. Our author puts the Bible in its wholeness back into the preacher's hands with the commission, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God". Another outstanding value is connected with *the task of evangelism*. Dr. Smith distinguishes clearly between man's relation to God by nature and his new standing in grace. His distinction is backed by the whole authority of the New Testament—man is God's creature, he may *become* His son. In the following typical quotation he is in line with C. H. Dodd in his commentary on 1 John—"In the New Testament 'sons of God' and 'children of God' are never used of all men. . . . Only believers are sons. . . . Through Christ God is the father of believers, but not of others". This is a welcome return to biblical realism, and a healthful antidote to vague and sentimental universalism born of decadent liberalism. Happy will be the people whose minister revels in works such as this.

One would delight to be let loose with a couple of thousand words to expend on Oscar Cullmann's *Christ and Time*. Of all the books I have read in the past five years none has impressed or enriched me more than this. Its tremendous sweep, massive generalizations, profound biblicism and transcendent faith will move to the depths those who are capable of being moved by what is truly great. It is a volume to enlarge the mind with great conceptions of Christ; to awe the soul into reverence in the contemplation of God's over-all purpose; and to lift one's faith to Him as the measure and meaning of all things. This is not easy going, but neither is Mount Everest. The view repays the toil. The book is published by the S.C.M. Press, price 18/-.

The New Testament Against its Environment by Floyd Filson (S.C.M. Press, 6/-) is a slight volume which has a companion (equally felicitous) by G. Ernest Wright on the Old Testament. Its aim is to set in relief the distinctiveness of the essential message of the Gospel. Whatever that message may owe to environment relates only to form; the content is unique. This is exhilarating reading for those who have lain too long in the enervating calm of theories originating from the comparative study of religions. Filson shows that the Gospel is good news, fresh, vital, original. "It is not in its essentials a secondary echo of themes originating elsewhere. It is a distinctive message which

sets it *against* its environment." These hundred pages are like a draught of water from a crystal spring in the parched throat of a desert-traveller.

It is some considerable time since a thorough-going conservative commentary on the Gospels, built on the grand scale, has been forthcoming. It has now arrived in Norval Geldenhuys' *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 25/-). Here is a work which can be confidently recommended, for its nearly seven hundred pages are replete with exegetical insight, biblical theology and judicious application—a rare trinity of virtues. Unlike most commentaries of its dimensions this one comes from a pastor, a pastor who knows what the flock needs and has learned how to supply it. The method by which the general teaching is separated from more technical and detailed matters is likely to encourage its use by the immature, while the generous quotations from the best authorities and a fairly full index of Scripture references enhances its general usefulness. We would predict that lovers of God's Word will for long associate the name Geldenhuys with that of St. Luke.

Two volumes, offering "a survey of historical revelation", are the work of the principal of the Rhineland Bible Institute, Erich Sauer by name. Having been translated into a number of European languages they now appear in English and are introduced by Mr. F. F. Bruce, Head of the Department of Biblical Studies in Sheffield University, who says of this work, "We have nothing quite so good [in English] by way of a handbook of evangelical theology . . . based on the historical order exhibited by the Bible itself". The author is apparently highly esteemed in Europe and belongs to a Church where evangelical traditions of a markedly conservative character are upheld. The aim is genuinely expository, with a rich vein of originality, and should commend itself to many who are seeking a fresh approach to the task of expository preaching. The purpose of the writer is to help preachers, and much of the material is set out in a form resembling homiletical outlines. Of these there are upwards of two hundred, to which are added several thousand Scripture references. The Old Testament volume bears the title *The Dawn of World Redemption* and the New Testament one is called *The Triumph of the Crucified* (Paternoster Press, 10/6 each volume).

For those who seek valuable helps in small compass reference should be made to the Torch Bible Commentaries (S.C.M. Press). Like most series they are of unequal value, but they all indicate the general change in the theological climate—a determination to treat the Bible with the seriousness it demands and deserves as being the Word of God. Some that seem worthy of special mention are *St. Mark* (A. M. Hunter), *Galatians* (J. A. Allan) and *Philippians-Colossians* (F. C. Synge). Whilst the view-point of the authors is that of the still-prevailing school of criticism there is much for those who are otherwise persuaded. Generally speaking there is sane explanation of the text coupled with pointed application. The aim is to make the first century message speak to the twentieth century situation. Of similar dimensions, and by the same publishers, though strangely enough not included in the series, is C. E. B. Cranfield's *I Peter*, which the writer considers the

best among a spate of small commentaries on that epistle in recent times.

There is much more on the bookseller's shelves which merits attention. These notes are written that others may browse and find even better bargains. At least it may help some to turn their tokens into books and their tallies into pamphlets before the fateful day of their expiry.

The Preacher and the Bible

BY THE REV. A. W. HABERSON, M.A.

TWO things impress many of us in our work to-day in the parish. In the first place, there seems on every side a hunger for spiritual things, though often the desire for it is inarticulate. And many of those who in some way are seeking God, instinctively assume that the Bible is the book from which they will gain information. There is, therefore, an increasing interest in the Bible and a desire to read it, but because its pages often seem hard to understand, that desire is often never satisfied and the book is left neglected.

In the second place, when men and women turn towards the things of God, they naturally look to the clergy for help, and because they feel that what they want is to be found through the pages of the Bible, they expect the clergy to know their Bible and to be able to explain it. Men and women everywhere, in all walks of life, are more and more feeling that the message of the Bible is vital for the welfare of both the individual and the nation. But alas, not only does the general public not read the Bible, but even Christian people, who claim that the Book reveals their Saviour, do not know its pages and often do not regularly read them. And what is more tragic still is that the clergy themselves frequently are ignorant of its teaching, have not memorized many of its promises and precepts, and do not build their preaching upon its authority. More and more, therefore, we need to get back to a Bible ministry; for we shall only satisfy the hearts of men in proportion as we ourselves know the Bible in our minds, believe it in our hearts, experience it in our lives, and unfold it with our lips. Let us never forget those words given us through St. Paul, which apply alike to the Old and to the New Testament—"the holy scriptures . . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (i.e. completely fitted out) unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 15-17).

If we would fulfil this our true calling—to preach the Word—there are five aspects about the Bible that appear to require emphasis:

- i. Present the Charm.
- ii. Know the Contents.
- iii. Yield to the Character.
- iv. Experience the Calling.
- v. Preach the Challenge.