BOOK REVIEWS

Erasmus of Christendom, by Roland H. Bainton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969. xii, 308 pp. $6.95. Reviewed by Wm. S. Barker, Associate Professor of History, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee.

As Bainton's title indicates, Erasmus is increasingly becoming the 16th century man for an ecumenical 20th century. Although regarded as subversive by both the Protestants and the Romanists of the age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Erasmus represents for Bainton the kind of mediating piety which provides hope for reconciliation and reunion in our own day. The Evangelical reader will come away from this book with a greater appreciation for the heart of Erasmus and with a hope one day to see him in heaven, but also with a fuller understanding of why Luther found Erasmus so frustrating and with a conviction that while Erasmus' way may win in the 20th century—as it did not in the 15th—it is not the way to genuine reform of the church.

Roland Bainton's works are always a delight to read, not least because of the contemporary illustrations that one has come to expect to decorate his pages. This book does not disappoint in this regard. While it is not as big a book as might have been anticipated—it is not a biography including every minute detail discoverable about the subject's life, but rather a chronological essay concentrating on the intellectual issues in which Erasmus was involved—it nevertheless fulfills Bainton's purpose of giving Erasmus his due by including in one volume the results of the scholarly concentration on this figure in recent years. It should promptly become a standard work on Erasmus, and beyond that it is a book which everyone seriously interested in the Reformation and its relevance today should seek to absorb.

Erasmus sought to be Biblical although the classical heritage always had a strong influence on him. It was his edition of the Greek Testament and re-translation of it into Latin which pleased and proved so useful to Luther. It was his *Paraphrases of the New Testament* which Edward VI had placed in all the churches of England. He was sincerely interested in reforming the evils in the church to which he was so sensitive. His sensitivity was almost totally in the ethical area, however, almost to the exclusion of doctrinal concern. While he reveres the cross, to him Jesus is primarily the teacher—not only by precept, but by example of humility, of love, of kindness, of mercy, of peace. He claims to agree with Luther on justification by faith, yet he certainly does not agree with Luther on

the importance of this doctrine. Bainton sees all of this clearly and points out Erasmus' failure to see the logical connection between justification by faith alone and the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination which Erasmus continually sought to avoid.

Why did Erasmus not leave the Roman church? It was because he gave highest regard to *concordia* and *consensus.* He gave priority to reason over revelation, to goodness over truth ("let God be good" versus Luther's "let God be God"), to peace over purity. He did not see that Protestantism was increasing goodness, and he did see the Reformation as disrupting the peace. His cry was for toleration on both sides.

Erasmus' contribution to toleration and religious liberty is Bainton's real reason for appreciation of him. In such works as his *Here I Stand* on Martin Luther, his *Hunted Heretic* on Michael Servetus, and his *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century,* Bainton has shown a sympathetic understanding of the Protestant Reformers, but his real theme and interest have been the growth of religious liberty. In this book he cannot desert Luther. He concludes that both Luther's bludgeon and Erasmus' rapier may be needed for reform to take place. He remarks on pages 192 and 193, however, that the modern Protestant rather than the modern Roman Catholic scholar takes Erasmus' position, and neither of them really follows Luther, "who believed that he was proclaiming not his insights, but God's truths."

Here is the real problem, not only for the 16th century, but for the 20th. Do we really recognize that we are confronted by God's truths? Bainton tells on page 58 of Erasmus' English friend Thomas Linacre, a medical humanist and physician of Henry VIII who acquired mastery of Greek and upon finally giving up medicine, read the gospels for the first time, commenting: "Either this is not the gospel or we are not Christians." Erasmus lived in such an age, an age which cried for a radical reformation, yet he could claim that if Paul ever were to come back in his day, "he would lament not so much the state of the Church as the vices of men" (page 260). He was much too tolerant. A century or a generation before the Reformation Erasmus might have appeared historically as a hero of reform. But he lived as a contemporary with Luther, who better understood *Romans, Galatians,* the Apostle Paul, the gospel. With all of his sincere desire for reform Erasmus failed to stand for the evangelical truth of the gospel. This is why Luther even sought to convert him, the great exponent of the "philosophy of Christ," to Christ Himself. Our Lord might have dealt with Erasmus—more tenderly than did Luther—as He did with Nicodemus: Art thou the teacher of Europe (yea, of "Christendom") and knowest thou not these things? Ye must be born again.

The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll. By Joseph R. Rosenbloom. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970. Pp. XIII plus 88.

$4.50. Reviewed by Cyril J. Barber, Librarian, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have a fascination all their own, and technical studies of their contents will continue to come from the press for many years to come.

This work by a Faculty member in the History and Classics Department, Washington University, is limited to a consideration of the variants between the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll (which he designates MS) and the Masoretic Text (MT).

Part I is devoted to a detailed consideration of the variants. Part II draws significant general conclusions on the Scroll as a whole and concentrates on considering the value, importance, and reason for corrections within the MS and the relationship of the MS to the other versions.

In general Rosenbloom vindicates the MT, but in his comments on Isaiah 35:8 he prefers the rendering of the St. Mark's Scroll. He writes:

> A very attractive variation is found in 35/8, where the first *wdrk* is deleted in the MS, a reading which is found in the Peshitta. The meaning of the verse is clearer with the MS and follows its tendency to delete repetitions.

Other instances where he prefers the MS over the MT are to be found in his comments on Isaiah 41:2 and 45:2.

Passages which show the accuracy and superiority of the MT are Isaiah 12:4; 24:6; 35:6; 48:7 and 49:5, to name a few.

The thoroughness of Rosenbloom's work can be seen from the way he handles passages like Isaiah 1:8-10, and his frequent reference to the LXX, the Peshitta and the Targums. His work is interspersed with interesting discussions on the text and the variants of the MS. Some of these discussions may be found by referring to verses like Isaiah 17:8; 19:18; 43:9; 56:6; and 65:15-16.

In concluding his discussion of the St. Mark's Scroll the author states that "The MS may be seen as an interpretative copy of the MT and at the same time a manuscript very closely related to the MT" or a recension of the MT (p. 81).

While Rosenbloom's work is not intended to be a critique of either the St. Mark's Scroll or the MT, he has provided Bible students with a list of the necessary variants; and this will cast a degree of light on their study of this important portion of God's Word.

Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary, by John B. Taylor. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969. 285 pp. $3.95. Reviewed by

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The complex and much avoided book of Ezekiel is finally receiving some long overdue attention as can be seen from the completion of Walter Zimmerli's huge work on Ezekiel in the *Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament,* Charles Feinberg's clear and important work recently released by Moody Press, and the reprint edition of the reprinted classic by Patrick Fairbairn. Now we may also add another fine commentary on this prophet by the Vice-Principal of Oak Hill College, London, John B. Taylor. Taken together, these four commentaries would provide an interesting panel of experts on the book—especially if Ezekiel himself should be present to respond to their observations on his literary work!

This volume continues the high level of competence exemplified by its three predecessors—Derek Kidner (on *Proverbs* and *Genesis*) and the volume by Arthur Cundall and Leon Morris (on *Ruth-Judges*) in the Tyndale Old Testament series.

Taylor reviews the destructive criticism recently aimed at discrediting the unity of the book and decides in favor of a unified content embraced by an opening vision (1-3) and a concluding vision (40-48).

Always careful to show the stream of thought and the connections between sections, Taylor is none the less incisive in his grasp of some key theological matters; e.g. Ezk. 21:27 is a cryptic reference to the Genesis 49:10 "Shiloh" passage, Ezekiel 18 is not a case for individual responsibility to be taken in isolation or a flat denial of corporate responsibility as it is not a plea for justification by works, and Ezekiel 37 speaks of a restored Israel in the Messianic age.

Some minor refinements might be tendered, e.g. on the Ezk. 23:26 we might observe that the Israelites had been commanded to "ask" (not "borrow") for the jewels of the Egyptians by the *Lord* and *Moses* (Ex. 12:35-36) and therefore this Ezekiel allusion could not be a case of the pigeons coming home to roost. Another example might be the switch in Ezk. 26:12ff to the 3rd person plural which significantly carries out the announced intention of the Lord to bring up "many nations" (vs. 3) after the repeated references to the 3rd person singular and to Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 7-11) thereby allowing for the words and actions of vss. 12ff. to be closely (in this case, literally) identified with Alexander the Great and his campaign.

We would also hope that J. B. Taylor is not among those "many Christians" who "would echo Ellison's verdict" on the Messianic passages of the Old Testament, viz., that "this is one of the many examples where the Hebrew prophets spoke better than they knew." (p. 102 on Ezk. 9:3-7: see my disavowal of this principle in *JETS,* XIII (1970), pp. 92-96).

This apparently harmless observation, if true, would be enough to wreck the prophet's authority and introduce pandemonium into any hermeneutical system. The authors knew what they were saying when they spoke Messianically (I Peter 1:10-12 also says they were perfectly aware of what they spoke!).

In the treacherous waters of chapters 37-48, Taylor attempts to hold a proper balance between the historical relevance of this message to the listeners and readers in Ezekiel's day and a valid futuristic fulfillment in the days of Messiah. Having cautioned us against an "over-literal" interpretation, he adopts an "apocalyptic" hermeneutic which sees in the temple a sort of incarnation of God's plan for Israel. Just what this is and how "apocalyptic" symbols yield up these values he does not take time to elucidate. This needs to be done in future editions. Indeed, he does find the worship of the Lord who is present in their midst to be central (the ritual details) and the blessing of God to all the barren places of earth (the river from the temple) while the duties and privileges of God's people continue (temple duties and apportionment of the land).

Premillennial interpreters (especially of the non-covenantal and non-dispensational variety) will wish that Taylor had interacted more with Berkeley Mickelsen's suggestion that Ezekiel's final oracles are to be treated "in terms of equivalents, analogy or correspondence" (*Interpreting the Bible*, p. 296) or with the logic G. H. N. Peters' *The Theocratic Kingdom* (III, p. 83ff.). The latter arrives at almost identical conclusions as Taylor, but the basis of those conclusions are not explained. (See also J. O. Buswell, Jr. *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 537). One thing for sure, the "once for all" of Hebrews and any futuristic interpretation of the sacrifices and worship of Ezekiel 40-48 must still receive some close investigation.

We congratulate author and publisher for another very useful tool to the Glory of God. May this little guide be the instrument under God to bring great numbers of readers back to the book of Ezekiel even as John B. Taylor prayed as he sent forth this volume on Easter Day, 1969.

Epistles of Peter and Jude, by J. N. D. Kelly. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. 387 pp. Reviewed by Cyril J. Barber, Librarian, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

The Christian world has come to regard the writings of Dr. Kelly of Oxford University with the greatest respect. His *Early Christian Doctrines, Early Christian Creeds, The Athanasian Creed*, and *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* have earned him deserved praise.

In the present volume, the thirteenth in the Harper's New Testament Commentary series, the reader will find that Kelly is less conservative than in his earlier commentary on the Pauline epistles to Timothy and

Titus. Where First Peter is concerned, Kelly argues for its authenticity (dating it about A.D. 64) but leaves the Petrine authorship in doubt. He refutes the idea that the Epistle is a sermon or a baptismal liturgy and treats it as a letter; although, being an Anglican, he sees in it strong baptismal significance.

Kelly rejects the Petrine authorship of Second Peter and regards it as part of the "luxuriant crop of pseudo-Petrine literature which sprang up around the memory of the Prince of Apostles." He sets the date of composition at about A.D. 100-110—outside the canonical writings and approximately thirty years after Peter's martyrdom.

While holding to the priority of Jude, Kelly rejects its Judean origin. The Epistle, he says, may have been written by the brother of James but was probably penned "between A.D. 80-90 or even nearer the end of the century." This makes Jude's Epistle pseudonymous as well.

It is as an exegete that Kelly excels. His treatment of the text is very detailed and concise, and his comments are enriched with interesting word studies drawn from early Christian and pagan literature.

The inclusion of an up-to-date bibliography enhances the value of this commentary, which is designed for the serious student of the New Testament and not for the layman.

All Things Made New. By Lewis B. Smedes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. 272 pp. $6.95. Reviewed by J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

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"Union with Christ" is the chief emphasis. The author consciously tries to avoid the pantheistic and mystical tendencies to which this theme often leads, but some passages almost obscure the numerical otherness between the believer and the Lord.

Too much value is ascribed to the evolutionary pantheism of Teilhard de Chardin (p. 21, note 15). Anti-millennial bias is shown in undue praise for the "realized eschatology" of C. H. Dodd (p. 40).

The unfortunate dispensationalism which inadvertently crops out where least to be expected is apparent in the discussion of "what Paul means by the 'written code'" (p. 40).

The discussion of the phrase "the Lord is the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:17) almost obliterates the personal distinction between the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity (p. 57). Rather it should be understood that "the Lord," "*Kyrios*," is the regular LXX word for *Jahweh* and what Paul says is that *Jahweh* in the Old Testament refers to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Father and to the Son.

There is a trace of "adoptionism," which fails to recognize the eternal deity and equality of Christ. It is unfortunate to refer to the resurrection as Smedes does (p. 59) as "the turning point in the life of Jesus Christ," before which, "He was a man, a Jew."

To refer to Christ as a "corporate personality" (p. 61) is erroneous.

Pantheistic tendencies usually lead to Universalism. Smedes says (p. 131), "One feels an instant sympathy with Bonhoeffer's bold remark, 'Jesus is not *a* man. He is *man*. . . .The name Jesus contains within itself the whole of humanity, and the whole God' " and Smedes continues, "is the destiny of mankind sealed by the fact that Jesus is *the* real man and therefore the whole of mankind?"

To speak of the humanity of Jesus as "become deified" (p. 161) is seriously in conflict with orthodox Chalcedonian Christology.

Smedes seriously misconstrues (p. 229) Colossians 1:24. Certainly Christ *completed* His atoning work, and there is nothing lacking in His sufferings. The words, *tou Christou,* are *attributive* genitive, not subjective. Paul wishes to fill up the lack of Christian afflictions in his flesh.

Smedes approximates the sacramentalism of the Anglo-Catholics, if not of the Romanists, in his last chapter, "The Body of Christ."