

Book Reviews

Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers. Waco: Word 1977. 196 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Stephen Hollaway, Campus Minister, University of Alabama.

The collection of essays assembled by Jack Rogers of Fuller Seminary in *Biblical Authority* will provide useful ammunition for theological debate. Most of the contributors are critical of Harold Lindell and are able to show the inconsistencies and absurdities of the strict inerrancy position. The chief intention of this volume is not, however, polemic but irenic. Rogers wants to be a peacemaker, avoiding division in the evangelical camp by focusing on the authority of the Bible rather than on a doctrine of inspiration.

Peacemaking is generally a noble motive, but it is a dangerous motive in theologizing. In our concern for making peace, we may allow political concerns to override concerns which are more genuinely theological. Are the authors of this volume more concerned with speaking the truth about the Bible or with finding common ground on which evangelicals can unite? I am not certain. It is my uncertainty at this point which leaves me uneasy about this insightful and useful book.

The consensus of the contributors is that the current conflict is not a battle for the Bible but a battle for a particular doctrine of inspiration, the Hodge-Warfield tradition of inerrancy. The arguments against the view that the Bible must be free from all error - scientific, historical, or otherwise - are quite convincing. What is lacking is a bold, positive statement of what the Bible really is. Rogers and David Hubbard call us back to the Reformation theology of Luther and Calvin, but even this call is muffled by constant reassurances that this is the genuine "evangelical" theology. Hubbard even refers to the Fundamentals (1910-11) as support for his position.

Perhaps I am projecting my own struggles, but I sense in these authors a certain frustration with the "evangelical" straitjacket

which is the product of Protestant scholasticism. Surely Baptist campus ministers feel themselves in this bind. Wouldn't it be refreshing to speak about the Bible without reference to the Baptist faith and message? Our theology is suffocating because of the nuisance of political considerations. It is because of the underlying concern for the politics of our institutions that we - and the contributors to this book - are unable to speak with the boldness of a Luther or a Calvin or a Barth.

Jack Rogers begins the discussion with a historical review of the church doctrine of biblical authority. He argues that the modern notion of scientific inerrancy is not the historic teaching of the church. It is based rather on Aristotelian philosophy, whose influence can be traced from Thomas Aquinas to the Protestant scholastic Francis Turretin to the Princeton theology of Hodge and Warfield on down to Lindsell. The central Christian tradition of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin is anti-Aristotelian in method; it stressed that the authority of Scripture was known by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the saving authority of Christ himself, not by human evidence or reasoning. The Bible was not seen as the direct speech of God. Since Origen, the mainstream scholars have taught the doctrine of accommodation, that God accommodated his word to the language and thought forms of limited human beings.

Clark Pinnock dissects three views of the Bible in contemporary theology. Predictably, liberal theology is dismissed as inadequate in the area of biblical authority. It is refreshing that neo-orthodoxy (here called New Reformation Theology) is not treated as a form of liberalism, but it too is eventually discredited. Pinnock shows some appreciation for Barth as an ally, but he faults Barth and his fellows with ambiguity in the relationship between the Word of God and the actual words of Scripture. The third view considered is the "conservative evangelical" view which simply identifies the Word of God with the words of Scripture. While claiming to advocate inerrancy, Pinnock argues against inerrancy so convincingly that we wonder what motive he might have for affirming it. Once again, I am struck by the lack of strong "evangelical" alternative to inerrancy. I find myself drawn back to Barth. Perhaps any attempt to make a scientific statement of the relationship of the Word and words leads to an absurdity such as inerrancy. Perhaps it is the ambiguity of Barth's position which places him closest to the truth.

The most astute theologian represented is Bernard Ramm. He asks: Is *sola scriptura the Wesen* (essence) of Christianity? The

Reformation doctrine of "scripture alone" meant that the Bible was the highest authority for theology, not that belief in the Bible was the essence of Christian faith. The Reformers also taught *sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus*. Ramm points out that some "evangelicals" make a theory of inspiration the Wesen of Christianity when they assume that this is the most important doctrine in a person's theology. Even Hodge and Warfield did not teach that the great Christian doctrines were dependent on the foundation of biblical inspiration. They were believable in themselves. Ramm also touches on two issues Baptists have yet to face: the relation of inspiration to the formation of the canon and the relation of tradition to the interpretation of Scripture. I wish he had pursued these issues further, for our Baptist theology-sans-ecclesiology is terribly weak at this point. Any theory of inspiration without a theory of interpretation is useless.

As in any anthology, the quality of contributions is uneven. Berkeley Mickelson's discussion of authority rambles into a discussion of the authority of God, Christ, and the Apostles. Earl Palmer gives a personal testimony on the role of the Bible in his ministry. David Hubbard gives a pep-talk calling us back to Reformation faith and forward to "devout scholarship." As a whole, the collection is helpful and should be useful not only to the campus minister but to that rare student who is troubled by the issue of biblical inerrancy.



The Battle For The Bible, by Dr. Harold Lindsell. Grand Rapids: Zondervon Publishing Company 1976. 218 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by Burt Purvis, Baker Road Baptist Church, Baytown, Texas.

This volume is a brief overview of the issue of biblical inerrancy and its history. The book originated as an outgrowth of the Biblical inerrancy Issue across evangelical Christianity. Dr. Lindsell has had a great deal of experience at seeking out and exposing heretics in other denominations. Now, as the issue has surfaced in Southern Baptist life, he has chosen to bring into focus these issues and the personalities accused of such Scriptural atrocities.

Dr. Lindsell begins with a basic explanation of the Biblical inerrancy issue, its effects and Scriptural perspective. This section

was helpful in seeing several dangers and ramifications of the issue. However, Dr. Lindsell slips into a very biased attack on any opinion of the issue which disagrees with his. It is very subtle at times, but never-the-less, it is present and it undermines his objectivity.

Dr. Lindsell also points out that one of the very important issues at hand is a definition of terms. The inability of evangelicals to agree on the meaning of "inerrancy" and "infallibility" provides a helpful insight to understanding the total problem. However, it was difficult to interpret precisely what he meant by the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture.

At this point Dr. Lindsell goes to great length to provide the historical perspective of the issue. This section provided excellent historical insight and understanding relating to the authority of Scripture. As he moves into the modern era, he tends to be very biased and aggressive toward the liberal perspective.

In the section dealing with the Lutherans and Southern Baptists he calls names, cites examples and seems to draw the battle lines to create a battle for the Bible. This attack destroys Dr. Lindsell's objectivity and logical credibility with most of those seeking logical and reasonable answers.

Dr. Lindsell shares several deviations that follow when inerrancy is denied. At times he tends to over-state his case, but he does present some excellent documentation to point out the results of an inadequate stand on the issue. He displays his historical perception as he is able to interpret events in light of their relationship to Biblical authority.

Almost as a footnote Dr. Lindsell tries to deal with some of the more difficult issues raised by a strong Biblical inerrancy stand. These examples reflect his vast knowledge of the field as well as some very workable answers to difficult Biblical questions. At the same time, it seemed unnecessary to deal with the specific issues. A whole book dealing with such issues would be in order.

Dr. Harold Lindsell presents an excellent understanding of the issue of Biblical inerrancy. He does not, however, attempt to be objective. His personal attacks and intensive criticism communicates a personal vendetta on the issue. He does have a readable style and does command good use of the language in communicating

historical facts and insights. It almost seems, however, that he has commissioned himself to be the commander-in-chief of the conservative forces to lead the Battle For the Bible.



A Short History of THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE,
by Robert M. Grant. New York: The Macmillan Company 1948.
204 pp. \$1.45.

Reviewed by Jim Morrison, Campus Minister, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma.

This is a slight revision of the first edition which appeared in 1948. There has been a growing concern for the history of Biblical interpretation, and Grant's work will provide helpful instruction for those with limited background in this area and others whose theological training has dulled over the years.

The study examines the principle methods which Christians have employed in the interpretation of Scripture and the circumstances which led to their employment. He gives special emphasis to the early and formative period of the church's life. He covers those periods of church history in which significant new developments took place. Grant feels that the Scriptures belong to the Church or believing community. At the same time, however, the investigator must remain a free scholar as well as a churchman. The interpreter is responsible to the truth as he sees it, but also to the Christian community.

Grant begins with Jesus and Paul and their understanding of the Old Testament. Jesus is seen as placing the two great commandments of love of God and of neighbor as the light through which all the rest must be regarded. Also, he sees his mission as fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies. The author points out that while in earlier days it was more popular to distinguish between the religion of Jesus and Paul's religion about Jesus, more recent study insists on the continuity between Jesus and the Apostle.

In the author's understanding, the second century was a crucial period as the early church struggled to ascertain what constituted authoritative or sacred writings. It is difficult for modern believers

to fully appreciate the struggles of the early church leaders in their efforts at seeking truth and combatting the heresies of the day. Were it not for the persistence of men like Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus, the course of Christian history might well have been diverted from the Apostolic witness at the outset. They were limited in not having the complete New Testament at their disposal and mistakes were made. However, we are indebted to them, particularly to Irenaeus, for principles of sound interpretation which are valid today.

Two schools of interpretation had heavy influence during this period. Those of Alexandria developed allegory as their chief exegetical tool. The School of Antioch offered a more literal approach through the efforts of Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Theophilus of Antioch. Grant sees the Middle Ages as a transition from the allegorical interpretation to the literal sense of Scripture. St. Thomas Aquinas was perhaps the most influential philosophical theologian of the period.

The Reformation period, with Luther as its chief spokesman, elevated the text of Scripture to the standing of sole authority. It was no longer one of several pillars which upheld the house of faith; it was the sole foundation.

Grant then traces the rise of rationalism through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to Schleiermacher. "In the course of the century the differences between the Biblical writings and any other writings came to be ignored."

The chapter on Modern Protestant Interpretation was the most difficult for this reviewer to follow. Grant concludes, "one result of the new New Testament and a decline in attempts to read the miraculous out of the 'original record'."

Careful reading of Grant's book developed new insight and breadth of understanding of the history of Biblical interpretation. It is a study of the amazing way God preserved the Scriptures in difficult and dark days and used men with whom we might not always agree, but to whom we owe a deep debt of gratitude.



Review and Expositor, "Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation"
Vol. LXXI, No. 2, Spring 1974.

_____, "Recent Study Bibles and Translations,"
Vol. LXXVI, No. 3, Summer 1979.

Reviewed by Neal Schooley, Campus Minister, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater.

Journals continue to be a valuable resource for current study of major theological issues that confront pastors and campus ministers. Because most are published regularly, often quarterly, they are current and provide the reader with a variety of perspectives on the major issues. The two issues of *Review and Expositor* chosen for this review are no exception in that they deal with a major source of controversy in Southern Baptist life and the subject of this issue of *The Campus Minister*. While these two specific issues are chosen by this writer because of their continuing quality and role in Southern Baptist scholarship, other journals could also be included.

The first issue is titled, "Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation," and includes articles and responses by such noted scholars as Bernard L. Ramm, John D. W. Watts, James Leo Garrett, Jr., Carl F. H. Henry, Morris Ashcraft, Eric C. Rust, and Harold Lindsell. Their articles will be of interest to most students of the Bible and have particular value to the campus minister who is often called upon by students to clarify questions they confront about the Bible.

The article by John D. W. Watts, "The Historical Approach to the Bible: Its Development," gives a very brief overview of the history of biblical studies. Biblical criticism has been grossly misunderstood in many evangelical circles, especially by college students who receive their first serious introduction to biblical criticism in a college course. They have often been led to believe that such study is "of the devil" by earlier pastors and teachers. Therefore, the campus minister will find this article valuable in that the author gives the reader an overview which will greatly enhance his appreciation of biblical studies.

Other articles also deal with the issue from an historical perspective, namely the article by James Leo Garrett, Jr., "Represent-

ative Modern Baptist Understandings of Biblical Inspiration." Garrett has critiqued the contributions of noted Baptist scholars such as H. Wheeler Robinson and A. H. Strong. Of course the article is by necessity brief and limited in scope. However, he has contributed to the reader's understanding of Baptist contributions to biblical interpretation, especially in the sense that others have paved the road on which contemporary Baptists walk.

Carl F. H. Henry and Eric C. Rust, both well known and outstanding scholars, through with different views, have written articles on hermeneutics and biblical faith and science respectively. Each author's article is followed by a response from Morris Ashcraft or Harold Lindsell. The debate serves to sharpen the perspective of the reader on these important issues.

The second journal issue under consideration is concerned with the many translations of the Bible that have appeared the past couple of decades. The writers present critiques of the following translations - The Revised Standard Version and the Oxford Annotated Bible, the Oxford Study Edition of the New English Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the Living Bible, and the Good News Bible. There is also an excellent article by Robert Bratcher, translator of the Today's English Version, on "Englishing the Bible." He gives a brief historical survey of the efforts to translate the Bible into English. Of course, the impact of these efforts on church history cannot be overemphasized.

The value of this issue of the **Review and Expositor** lies in its helping the reader become a more informed reader of the translation he is reading at the moment. Historically, we have often read the Bible without any consideration of translation limitations and have used as a basis of our theological arguments passages that were questionable translations. While the authors do not begin to deal with all of the limitations and strengths of each translation, they do help the reader begin the process. Consequently, copies of this issue would be valuable to place in the hands of students who were especially astute in dealing with biblical issues. In addition, the issue of the **Review and Expositor** will be helpful to the campus minister as he strives to sharpen his own tools of interpretation and ministry to college students.

These two issues of the **Review and Expositor** ought to be

read by campus ministers. Few people who work with college students are not drawn into rather serious discussions on the nature of biblical interpretation and the comparative value of the several translations of the Bible. The value of these journals lie in their historical approach to interpretation and a keen understanding of the process of biblical translation. Each issue will be invaluable to those working with college students or, for that matter, those who work in any aspect of Christian ministry.



The Cambridge History of the Bible. Three volumes: "From the Beginnings to Jerome," edited by P. R. Ackroyd and C. V. Evans, Cambridge University Press, 1970; "The West from the Fathers to the Reformation," edited by G. W. H. Lampe, Cambridge University Press, 1969, and "The West from the Reformation to the Present Day," edited by S. L. Greenslade, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 1963. Total pages: 1,803.

Reviewed by John Burns, Campus Minister, Oklahoma City University.

Everything you ever wanted to know about historical hermaneutics but never were able to uncover can probably be found somewhere in the eighteen hundred pages of the three volumes of The Cambridge History of the Bible. A word of warning at the outset of this review: don't pick up these books if all you are looking for is an evening of light reading. These are for reference and research, not relaxation.

Each of the three volumes is designed to be complete in itself, covering specific periods of history. Volume One (strangely enough, the last to be published, in 1970) deals with the earliest efforts of biblical interpretation and is subtitled, "From the Beginnings to Jerome." Famous names of early church history walk through these pages . . . Origen, Theodore, Jerome, Augustine . . . and others whose styles of interpretation and theories of inspiration were significant during those early days. In addition to material on specific persons, there are sections on biblical languages and texts, the development of the canon, non-canonical books, early Old Testament exegetical styles, and biblical interpretation in the early church. Two especially interesting chapters in this volume deal with

the interpretation of the Old Testament in the New Testament and the place of the Bible in liturgy. The local campus minister will find help for student worship in each of these chapters.

Volume Two continues the story of the development of hermeneutics and is subtitled, "The West from the Fathers to the Reformation." The emphasis in this volume is principally concerned with the history of the Bible in medieval western Europe and covers vernacular scriptures in Germany, France, Italy and Spain, as well as the contributions of Jerome and Erasmus and the importance of the Vulgate. Three chapters in this volume deserve special mention. The first deals with the early Christian efforts in the production of papyrus and manuscripts. This is a fascinating account of the problems involved in preparing the papyrus for writing and the trial and error methods which led to improved and preservable manuscripts. Another interesting chapter deals with the efforts of early painters and sculptors to record biblical scenes in symbolic and simple fashion. Symbols of the Christian faith — anchor, dove, fish, etc. — are examined for their contribution to an understanding of scripture truth. The title for this chapter is "The People's Bible" for it describes how biblical truth, in all of its mystery, was communicated to the common people through image, imagery, color, design, and spectacle. A similar chapter deals with drawings and illustrations in medieval manuscripts, examples of which are found in the picture plates in the back of the book.

The final volume in the series (and the first to be published, 1963) covers the historical and theological events of the western church from the reformation to the present. The controversies surrounding biblical scholarship and interpretation which were so prevalent during the reformation are covered extensively. Commentaries on scripture became fashionable during this period, and an examination of various continental styles is also included. Of course, there is a great deal of discussion on the proliferation of English translations during the period and material contrasting Protestant and Roman Catholic traditional interpretation styles is also lengthy. For the campus minister who seeks to assist students in their worldview, an excellent chapter on "The Bible and the Missionary" may be found in this volume. The use of scripture in various mission movements around the world is a fascinating story and one that can be challenging to students contemplating their own place in world missions.

A valuable feature of this series is that, like each volume, the

chapters within are designed and prepared to be complete in themselves, covering in depth the subject described. As a result, you can check the table of contents in each book for a particular topic and have a lengthy monograph at your fingertips. This feature is useful in research and, while each topic is fully covered by recognized scholars in the field, the content does not become so terribly technical that it becomes useless.

An extensive bibliography for further study is included in each volume along with an index of topics, personalities, theories, places, authors, etc. Each of the three volumes includes a series of plates (pictures of early manuscripts, illustrations, paintings, etc.) which graphically portray the changing styles of biblical production. Helpful notes explaining each plate (approximately fifty per volume) precede the plate section in each book.

The local campus minister who wishes to study the variety of interpretative styles throughout the history of Christian thought will find these volumes invaluable and almost inexhaustible in scope. They do not belong in every campus minister's library, but do provide a significant contribution to the serious student of biblical hermeneutics.



The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church, by James D. Smart. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970. 175 pp. \$4.95.

Reviewed by Loy W. Reed, Campus Minister, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Students and those whose responsibility it is to work with them are expressing a new and renewed interest in the Bible. Dorm studies are springing up with official input and guidance as well as without. Students are meeting on their own to study the claims of the church and her "authority." Unfortunately, both official and unofficial groups are often of studying more about the Bible through the use of others commentaries than they do the scripture itself.

In a time of change and the desire oft times to have "the" answer, we need the insightful commentary of James Smart. He argues persuasively that we need the disciplined scholarship to know what the Bible says in its context. But, he also emphasizes the

necessity to continue in our task; for the task of interpretation is never complete until we have helped others to see the implication of the scripture for today.

Smart deserves a hearing on both counts. Students and campus ministers alike have been guilty of reading the scripture devotionally only! We need to experience afresh the Bible as a public book in the context of the community given not as my own personal guide but as the authority for the total people of God. That means that our exegesis must be stringent enough to discover what the Bible said and then interpret this in the light of what the church has been as well as what we need to be.

For Smart, the single most important question for hermeneutics centers in the need to bring the ancient text into "the language and life context of the late twentieth century persons." The first chapter details why the scriptures are not being used in the churches and summarizes with several reasons: 1) Division of disciplines within the seminary community combine with a lack of communication between Old and New Testament departments. 2) The failure to consider the implications of the scripture for today and the feeling that once we have applied the historical critical method and "heard" the writer in his context, we have completed our task. And finally, 3) The failure of those involved within higher criticisms to work with the preacher to interpret the message for modern man and our situation.

There is possibly a fourth element and that is the inability or unwillingness on the part of the one attempting to interpret the scripture to share with his people what he knows to be critical method and truth. Thus two things occur: 1) we are trained only in the descriptive historical method, or 2) we do not desire or know how to combine these tools with the process of application.

In his discussion for re-opening the hermeneutical question, he points up three areas in which Barth and Bultmann were in agreement: First, a new approach to the subjectivity of the interpreter. Secondly, interpretation must include the translation from the original language into thought forms and language which is meaningful for today. He notes the reverse as well and comments on the importance of discovering accurately the original meaning of the text. A third point was that the decisive content of scripture is a revelation of God in which God comes to men. We must seek

how best to discover this revelation and that is the task of the scholar and preacher together.

Decrying what is sometimes referred to as a descriptive science and what Smart calls "the permission of ignorance," he makes his case for a biblical theology that uses the tools of scholarship with an acknowledged interpretive stance to allow the Word of God to speak to the contemporary situation. When this happens he states, "the Bible asserts its own authority." The help given by Smart goes beyond a statement of the problem and a request to re-open the hermeneutical question. He critiques the demythologizing of Bultmann making the point of "saving event" and the importance of an historical understanding of God's dealing with his people. As he later says, "no scripture, no church! no scripture, no revelation!" He then goes on to answer the question "how the Bible becomes contemporary."

The necessity of reinterpretation is seen in the way Jesus dealt with the Old Testament and the biblical authors who followed. The necessary warning follows, however, that we must always be conscious of maintaining our continuity with "both Israel and the New Testament church" else we face the danger of a cultural assimilation and ideology blocking what we sought — a word from God. The best summary comes from Smart himself. "In the last resort all that is needed is listening, that careful listening in which one's whole being and one's whole world is laid open to what is to be heard, and then the courage and integrity, . . . to speak and act in faithfulness in the situations of our own time." (Page 164)

Earlier he says, "the word of God has never needed men's defense, only the integrity of his devotion." (Page 129) The implications are enormous for the campus minister who would speak the word of God in relevance and power in the community of scholarship and student ministry. At a time of increased interest in the Bible on campus and the willingness of non-Christian groups to speak the word of authority such as The Way International, we must reassert our right to interpret the word of God in faith and with authority. Let it be said of us also that we speak not as the pharisees, but with the authority of one who has studied and knows the word of God for himself.



The Time is Fulfilled, by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978. 128 pp. \$2.95.

Reviewed by Richard Lewallen, Campus Minister and Bible Instructor, Angelo State University.

This volume is based on Bruce's 1977 Moore College lectures in Sydney, Australia and has for its purpose the interpretation of five examples of Old Testament themes in the New. Bruce dealt with a similar task in an earlier book, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (1969). In *The Time is Fulfilled*, he examines five scriptures not surveyed in the previous volume.

Each chapter is an essay on a specific verse. In one sense, it is a commentary on five prophetic themes. That makes the book worth having. But in a greater sense, it represents a worthy pattern of rightly handling the prophetic scriptures through sound scholarship as well as spiritual insight. With many uncertain sounds being heard interpreting the fulfillment of Old Testament themes, this volume is one of those necessary purchases.

The book retains the lecture style, but at the same time can serve as an aid to devotional growth. It is not, however, a book to recommend to most college students. It is a book for professionals. It will enrich the background of the campus minister and help him teach students to become better biblical interpreters.

Bruce's choice of scriptures is helpful.

The title of the book is taken from the first essay on Mark 1:14-15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe the good news." Bruce stresses that in fulfilling the time, Jesus is not merely responding passively to conditions favorable to the establishment of the kingdom; rather he has decisively taken the initiative to inaugurate the fulness of time which he has announced.

Other passages that are examined are: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me" (John 5:39); "What then shall we say about Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?" (Romans 4:1), "For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come

instead of the true form of these realities, it can never . . . make perfect those who draw near" (Hebrews 10:1); "For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

F. F. Bruce recently retired as Rylands professor of biblical criticism and exegesis in the University of Manchester (England). He has authored numerous books on biblical and historical subjects. In 1977 he published *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. He serves as General Editor of the *New International Commentary on the New Testament series* (NICNT). He also serves as editor of the *Evangelical Quarterly*.