Reviews.

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, by B. B. Warfield. Edited by S. G. Craig, with an Introduction by C. Van Til, 1948. (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia. $3.75.)

The main part of this volume consists of a reprint of a number of essays by Dr. Warfield on subjects connected with the inspiration of the Bible. The essays were originally published at various dates between 1892 and 1915, and the general point of view is that the Bible is wholly infallible, and that there are no degrees of inspiration. It may be appealed to at any point with the assurance that whatever it may be found to say, that is the Word of God (p. 106). The author is able to maintain this position by the simple device of avoiding any study of the dilemmas it involves. Our Lord said: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies" (*Matt.* v. 43 f.). May we really make equal appeal to the Old Testament law and to its abrogation without distinction, or has the abrogation superior authority for the Christian? When we read in 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 1 that it was the Lord who moved David to number the people, and in 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1 that it was Satan who so moved David, may we really accept these two statements as of equal validity? The reviewer once met one who overcame the difficulty here by supposing that God is Satan and Satan God! It is a pity that Dr. Warfield did not give us any guidance as to how he would meet these and a vast number of other dilemmas with which he leaves us.

More important, however, than these essays from a former generation is the long Introduction, in which Professor Van Til seeks to defend Dr. Warfield's positions in the face of recent movements of thought. He holds with the strongest emphasis that the views of Dr. Warfield are the only ones which can be held by a Christian, and he claims to defend them against all comers. That he is widely acquainted with the currents of modern thought is not to be denied, and that he has an acute mind is as little to be denied. Yet the reviewer found his essay exasperating because he so often sheers off from an argument just at the point where he ought to get to grips with it, or makes completely unexceptionable statements with which his Christian

opponents would wholly agree and then leaps to a conclusion that has no relation with them.

Throughout he lumps together all who do not accept his view of the infallibility of the Scriptures, whether they belong to other sections of the Christian Church or whether they are non-Christian or anti-Christian. The rejection of the infallible Bible, he says, involves the rejection of Christianity (p. 14). He defines the basic issue between himself and modern theology in these words: "In the Christian view of things it is the self-contained God who is the final point of reference while in the case of the modern view it is the would-be self-contained man who is the final point of reference in all interpretation" (p. 18). Lest the reader should suppose from this that Professor Van Til is a Barthian, let it be said that Barth is amongst those he criticizes, and he has published a whole volume in criticism of Barth and Brunner. Many who do not share Professor Van Til's view of the nature of the authority of the Scripture would deny, as strongly as he, that man is the final point of reference in all interpretation. Similarly he is expressing the view of many who disagree with him in his view of infallibility when he says that the orthodox Christian "claims for God complete control over all the facts and forces of the universe. Hence he claims for God exhaustive knowledge of all things. All the light of men is in relation to him who is *the* Light as candlelight is in relation to the sun. All interpretation on the part of man must, to be true, be reinterpretation of the interpretation of God by which facts are what they are."

Fundamentally, Professor Van Til seeks to show by argument that all argument is invalid unless his conclusions are accepted to begin with. "Reason employed by a Christian always comes to other conclusions than reason employed by a non-Christian" (p. 25). He denies to the natural man the ability to reason correctly. "He can follow a process of reasoning intellectually. He may even have a superior intellect. But of himself he always makes the wrong use of it" (p. 39). Again, he says: "There are two positions with respect to reality and knowledge. Applied to the question of the Bible it now appears that the infallible Bible is required if a man is to have any knowledge and if his process of learning is to be intelligible" (p. 46). It is surely futile, one would suppose, if these extravagant claims are justified, to attempt to reason with those who disagree with him. If there is no arbitrament of reason to which appeal can be made, then all argument is vain, since argument is by its nature an appeal to reason. And if Professor Van Til were really persuaded that it is in vain, he would not make any show of argument—though it is merely a show, since he resorts

to unsubstantiated claims to help him over all difficulties. He claims that in the position of Warfield we have "the most consistent defense of the idea of infallibility of Scripture" (p. 29). But what is meant by a "defense" if it is not in terms of reason, and how can it be in those terms if reason is identified with faith and a monopoly of it claimed?

There are moments when Professor Van Til recognizes the logic of his own positions, though he will rarely do so clearly and steadily. He says: "It might seem that the orthodox view of authority is to be spread only by testimony and by prayer, not by argument" (p. 38). To agree to this would be to condemn his whole essay. Moreover, he continues: "But this would militate directly against the very foundations of all Christian revelation, namely, to the effect that all things in the universe are nothing if not revelational of God". If then testimony and prayer will not suffice, but argument is called for, what is its nature? Professor Van Til tells us. "The method of argument that will alone fit these conditions may be compared to preaching." But is not preaching testimony? That he contemplates no real argument he makes quite clear in the following passage, in which he denies that the natural man is able to accept a true interpretation of the revelation of God.

Here he seems to the reviewer to be confusing two quite different things. The reviewer would wholly agree that the awakening to spiritual life—what Professor Van Til compares with the raising of Lazarus—can only be achieved by the grace of God and is not to be achieved by mere argument. But this does not mean that reason has no sphere, or that in its own sphere it is not supreme. Within the realm of argument reason is supreme, and whatever cannot justify itself to reason cannot claim to be reasonable. This is not for one moment to claim that all truth is rational truth, or that the sphere of reason is all-inclusive. Professor Van Til criticizes Aquinas and Butler and all similar writers on Apologetics, by holding that their argument "allows that the natural man has the plenary ability to interpret certain fact correctly even though he wears the colored spectacles of the covenant-breaker" (pp. 21 f.). But again he seems to go much to far. That reason cannot of itself attain the knowledge of God and His ways, and that for all our knowledge of him we are dependent on his Self-revelation is undoubtedly true. Yet it can be shown that there is nothing contrary to reason, and therefore unreasonable, in the content of revelation. It is precisely here that Professor Van Til, like Dr. Warfield, fails to come to grips with his subject. Ultimately their view of the infallibility of Scripture is a dogma, that must not be too closely examined, and that must be dealt with only in safe generalities.

It should be added that the infallibility that is claimed attaches only to the original autographs of Scripture. Professor Van Til says that Christians need not be worried about the fact that these are lost (p. 46). Against Brunner's view that the infallibility is then useless, he opposes the statement that without it men "are lost in the boundless and bottomless ocean of chance," but offers no serious grounds for this remarkable statement. He adds the further observation that "the true God if he revealed himself at all could not but reveal himself infallibly." This again neatly confuses the issue. Does Professor Van Til mean to say that the Bible is infallible in its revelation of God, but not necessarily infallible in its record of human history? Does he mean to say that it is infallibly true that God's will is that we should hate our enemies or that we should love them? Which of these is the infallible revelation of the God who is unchanging? Or does Professor Van Til hold that both infallibly revealed a God whose nature changed? The reviewer would agree with the statement that the true God could not but reveal Himself infallibly, but holds that the measure of the revelation is conditioned in part by its medium. He finds a revelation of God in Nature, though less profound and significant than His revelation through Moses; he finds the revelation through Moses less profound and significant than the revelation in Christ. In so far as God reveals Himself through human personality, the infallibility of His self-revelation is clouded by the fallibility of the medium, and it was precisely for this reason that the perfect revelation could only be made through the Perfect Man. A doctrine of the infallibility of the Old Testament renders unnecessary the Incarnation. The New Testament teaches that it is Christ and Christ alone who is the effulgence of the divine glory. He is therefore the supreme revelation of God, by whom all other revelation is to be tested, and all is not therefore on a flat level of infallibility. Professor Van Til may deny the title of those who hold this new Testament faith to be called Christian, but the keys of the Kingdom will remain in other hands.

Finally a Baptist may be pardoned for wondering how one who holds Professor Van Til's views on the infallibility of the Bible can belong to a Church which practises Infant Baptism. The "infallible" Bible knows only a baptism which follows faith, and which is a dying with Christ and resurrection to newness of life in Him.

H. H. Rowley.

An Approach to Christology by Aubrey R. Vine, M.A., D.D., B.Sc., London. (Independent Press Ltd. 21s. net.)

Dr. Vine, the able minister of Broad Street Congregational Church, Reading, is to be congratulated upon writing, in the midst of a busy ministerial life, a major work of this magnitude (480 pages). The academic competence of this book is guaranteed by the fact that it was approved by the Senate of the University of London for the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

The first part of the book is an exposition of the thought of Nestorius, based upon his work *The Bazaar of Heracleides.* Although Dr. Vine believes that the views of Nestorius were rightly rejected by the Church (e.g. the denial of the title Theotokos to the Virgin Mary was justly condemned), he finds in his metaphysic and Christology valuable ideas for the reconstruction of Christology in the second part of this book. Nestorius was not a Nestorian in the sense of upholding a duality of persons in the incarnate Christ. The positive assertions of Nestorius of which Dr. Vine approves are three: (1) "Jesus Christ was God in that He was the (allogenous) prosôpon[1] of God the Word, who during the existence of Jesus Christ had no other prosôpon, and God the Word is God in that His ousia and nature is (*sic*) ousia and nature of God, an ousia and nature one and indiscriminable." (2) "Jesus Christ was man in that He had a body and animal soul just as we have, and a centre of consciousness and will capable of feeling our urges and stresses." (3) "Jesus Christ was one, because there was never any centre of consciousness and will other than God the Word, who experienced in two natures, that of His own divine ousia and that of the ousia of humanity which He Himself completed."

The second part of the book seeks in the light of the above, to interpret and justify orthodox Christology against the background of a modern metaphysic (dynamic where that of Nestorius was static and mechanical), and modern science and biology. How orthodox Dr. Vine is can be illustrated by his belief in the Virgin Birth and in the impassibility of God (rightly and philosophically understood). The Christology which the author defends roughly corresponds to the ancient doctrine of enypostasia. "God, from whom the potentiality of the human spirit derived, quite evidently contains within Himself the fulness and perfection of anything which He causes to be manifest . . . and could quite readily realise within Himself . . . the appreciation and responses suitable to an ideal human spirit" (pp 370-1). That is, the Eternal Logos always has contained within Himself the potentiality of human

[1] A "prosôpon" is the manifestation of an "ousia" (essence) according to its nature (p. 105).

nature. No opposition, therefore, could exist between the human and divine natures of Jesus. The human nature, no less than the divine, finds its hypostasis in the divine Logos. In Jesus perfect manhood was fully integrated into God by complete identification with His will and purpose; and by His exaltation the Son of God has taken His perfect manhood up into the Godhead eternally (p. 379).

The biological side of the Incarnation whereby "God the Word was able to take into His own being . . . that which arose in the Blessed Virgin Mary" is described with deep reverence, but also with an amazing wealth of technical scientific detail concerning parthenogenesis. The divine condescension involved by the incarnation is defined, not as "kenosis" (emptying), but as "anapausis" (voluntary suspension). Dr. Vine rightly says that *Phil.* ii. 7 will not bear the weight which the kenotic theories have placed upon it. But he is on more questionable ground when he denies any truth to the doctrine of kenosis. His own rival theory of *anapausis* means that throughout His incarnate life the Son of God was voluntarily suspending His omnipotence and omniscience, accepting human limitations which at any time (even in babyhood) he could have thrown off. "God the Word as the infant Jesus could have spoken words of omniscient wisdom." Jesus Christ possessed "a double awareness: an awareness of the existence of sources of knowledge and power within Himself, but which He had chosen not to use . . . and an awareness which came to Him as awareness comes to us." This theory, which seems to us imply that our Lord lived a life of pretence, will seem to many readers to be quite incredible and not far removed from the Docetism which Dr. Vine vehemently repudiates. How the Divine could become human while remaining Divine is a mystery beyond our comprehension; but if we are to attempt an explanation at all, some (perhaps modified) theory of kenosis appears to be inevitable.

The second part closes with a defence of the Chalcedonian Definition in modern terms, and is followed by an Appendix consisting of "Notes on the Bazaar of Heracleides."

The book as a whole reveals an immense amount of painstaking work. Its excessively technical terminology does not make for easy reading; but to a careful and attentive reader the meaning will not be obscure. In view of the extent to which Dr. Vine uses with approval Greek philosophical terms and conceptions, it is surprising to find him rejecting the natural immortality of the spirit as "a Greek rather than a Christian concept" (p. 314). We are prompted to ask: Does not the (undoubtedly Biblical) doctrine that man is created in the image of God imply the existence of an immortal principle in man? The absence of any adequate treatment of the "imago Dei" in relation to the Logos

and to man, is, in our opinion, the most serious defect in the book.

Nevertheless this work is deserving of high praise for its valuable and, in many ways, successful attempt to show that an orthodox Christology is not incompatible with modern biological, scientific, and philosophical concepts.

(We have noted very few misprints. On p. 199 the reference to pp. 623-625 should apparently be to pp. 458-9. On p. 291 footnote 2, " parthogensis " should of course be " parthogenesis.")

A. W. ARGYLE.

The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers, by Thomas F. Torrance, D.Theol., B.D. (Oliver & Boyd. 12s. 6d.).

The writings of the sub-apostolic age are full of interest, but every reader is conscious of the great gulf which separates them from those in the New Testament, and is left asking himself the reason for the unfortunate change of atmosphere and outlook. In this monograph, approved for a doctorate of theology by the University of Basel, the seven writings known as the literature of the Apostolic Fathers are submitted to careful examination as regard their use of the word *charis* and its derivatives. Dr. Torrance, now one of the editors of the *Scottish Journal of Theology* (in the pages of which certain introductory portions of this book have already appeared) has no difficulty in showing how different is the conception of grace in the *Didache*, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas and Hermas from the characteristic New Testament view that it is " the breaking into the world of the ineffable love of God in a deed of absolutely decisive significance which cuts across the whole of human life and sets it on a new basis." In the second century writings salvation is made to depend on sustained personal effort. " The Gospel carries with it an eternal indicative, but post-apostolic Christianity laboured only under an imperative." Grace is often thought of as a needed potency imprisoned in the Church. Dr. Torrance points out that on the mission field today the converts of the first generations often have great difficulty in apprehending the radically new features of the gospel. In the life of the early Church the legalism of Judaisers and the Hellenism of Gnostics proved all too powerful. The use of the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Old Testament and the length of time before the Pauline letters established themselves as authoritative were contributing factors in the change that took place. Some of the true implications of the gospel—particularly as regards grace—were not recovered until the Reformation.

This is an important book for both theological students and advanced scholars, for the theology of these documents has never before been so exhaustively discussed in English. It will repay reading by all ministers, for it will drive them back upon the essential element in the good news they preach. Dr. Torrance assumes an earlier date for the *Didache* than many English scholars are ready to accept. A few small points may be noted for future printings. On p. 42 the words "do not" seem to have dropped out of his paraphrase of *Didache* 1, 3. The references in page 49, n. 6. hardly support his claim for an "almost liturgical use" of the words "commandments" and "ordinances" in 1 *Clement*. The references in notes 4 and 5 on page 62 seem misplaced. The Greek phrase on page 92 needs correction.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Eternal Purpose, by D. Tait Patterson. (Carey Kingsgate Press. 15s.).

In *Margaret Ogilvy*, that delightful portrait of his mother, Sir James Barrie tell us, "She begins the day by the fireside with the New Testament in her hands, an old volume with its loose pages beautifully refixed, and its cover sewn and resewn by her, so that you would say it can never fall to pieces. It is mine now, and to me the black threads with which she stitched it are as part of the contents. Other books she read in the ordinary manner, but this one differently, her lips moving with each word as if she were reading aloud, and her face very solemn. The Testament lies open on her lap long after she has ceased to read, and the expression of her face has not changed." Such quiet, unhurried, meditative reading of the Scriptures was the secret of her beautiful life; and we of this noisy, hurrying, restless generation need to rediscover this secret if we are to produce strong and winsome Christians, deeply rooted in the Faith.

This book is a sincere and valuable attempt to encourage such quiet, unhurried, meditative reading of the Bible. Its sub-title indicates that it is, "A method of devotion resting upon and sustained by the use of the Holy Scriptures." It is, in fact, entirely in the words of Holy Scripture. Mr. Tait Patterson has provided us with a Bible Reading and accompanying Devotions for every day of a whole year. There are five parts to each day's devotions. First, there is a short Adoration in Bible words. Then follows the selected Scripture passage printed in full and called The Lection which we are encouraged to read slowly and thoughtfully. This passes naturally into one of the great Bible prayers. A Scriptural Blessing follows, and the day's devotions close with The Meditation—a few sentences of Scripture which those who

use the book are advised to commit to memory and ponder throughout the day. The choice of Scriptures is imaginative and catholic and the wealth of devotion material in the Bible may well surprise those who are not familiar with such a classic as the *Preces Privatae* of Bishop Andrews.

It is the expressed hope of the compiler that, "The ordinary man or woman who finds it difficult to pray, and more difficult to read the Bible, may find in the daily use of this book a means of contact with our Lord and an increase of desire to follow more closely His way of life." It is difficult for a reviewer to decide how far the book is likely to achieve its avowed object: that can only be proved by sustained and devotional use of the book. But its very Scripturalness should make a wide appeal to members of our Baptist Churches and those who are regular in their use of the book will be richly rewarded by a steadily deepening knowledge of the Bible and by a valuable training in a disciplined prayer-life.

The book is attractively produced by the Carey Kingsgate Press and would make an admirable present to anyone whom one was trying to encourage in the devotional life.

EDGAR W. WRIGHT.

The Christian Origins of Social Revolt, by William Dale Morris. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 12s. 6d.)

This is a timely book. It draws attention to the way in which social revolution has been inspired by the Christian ethic, even when the majority of Church leaders have defended the "status quo." Beginning with some account of the social heresies of the Middle Ages, it concentrates attention on the Lollards and Hussites, the revolting peasants of sixteenth century Germany, the Anabaptists, the radical sects of seventeenth century England, Nonconformity at the time of the Industrial Revolution, the Chartists, the Christian Socialists of the mid-nineteenth century, and certain of the Christian pioneers of the modern Labour Party like Stewart Headlam and Keir Hardie. In all these cases inspiration was drawn directly from the Bible, and it is because in this country social revolution and Christianity have continued closely intertwined that there has not been the hostility between the organised working class and organised religion which has been so widespread on the Continent.

The book has some unsatisfactory features. It is its cumulative effect rather than the treatment of all the different sections which is impressive. Many of the chapters which are of very varied length, are little more than scissors and paste, and

in some cases better authorities might have been found. Engels did well to draw attention to the importance of Thomas Münzer, but to call him "in many respects a greater man than Luther" (p. 75) is to be guilty of exaggeration and distortion. There are a number of small errors of fact. For example, Wyclif was not himself the translator of the Bible, though he inspired others to the task (p. 26). Zwickau is in Germany, not Switzerland (p. 76 n.). Several of Walwyn's writings are now available, thanks to the work of Haller and Davies (p. 94). There are printer's errors on pages 28 and 90. Nor is it very clear from the concluding pages whether the author believes that there is continued inspiration to be drawn from the Christian religion, apart from the bald assertion of the Brotherhood of Man. The last section is headed "A New Humanism" and recalls William Morris's plea for "fellowship."

There is, however, much in these pages for Baptists to ponder. In the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries they were often among the most radical in their social sympathies. What were the causes of this change that has taken place during the last sixty years? Is there a way back into closer association with those whose passion is social justice?

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Some Victorian Portraits and Others by Hilda Martindale. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 10s. 6d.).

This book contains a dozen appreciations of men and women, with perhaps one exception, not widely known to fame, who in their day and generation wrought a good day's work. They occupied different stations in life and expressed their personalities in varying ways, but they seem to have in common a certain loftiness of character and a disinterested love of their kind. When I had finished the book I laid it down, saying to myself, "You have been in good company."

I was especially interested in the chapter in which the writer describes an unconventional parson. She confesses to a liking for such because she has found him to be a believer in reality and to be tolerant of other people's opinions. The parson she describes was William Drury who, having served as chaplain in the South African War and in the First World War ended his life as Rector of Binsted, a little hamlet in Sussex. He was exquisitely sensitive to every expression of beauty. Once when seeing a butterfly emerging in all its glory and settling on a flower, he was heard to murmur "The Kingdom of Heaven is with us."

He was very truthful, too. Once in a talk on vocation he confessed—" Well! I've often thought I was no good as a parson and ought to chuck it, but the only thing that keeps me from doing so is the certainty that I'd have to go back to it again next day, which is I suppose a certainty that it is my vocation."

A seat erected in the parish in memory of him bears the inscription, " He preached forgiveness."

No one will read this book and not be refreshed by it.

RHYS T. RICHARDS.

The Anabaptists of the 16th Century and their Influence in the Modern World by Ernest A. Payne. (Carey Kingsgate Press. 1s.)

" In one of the discussions at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches, it was pointed out that a large percentage, perhaps a quarter, of those in membership with the World Council, belong not to the Orthodox, the Anglican, the Lutheran or the Reformed traditions, but to another, one which runs directly back to the continental Anabaptists," says Mr. Payne almost at the end of this Dr. Williams's Trust Lecture, delivered at the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen. This sentence is a key one, for from first to last he has in mind the second part of the title—" their influence in the modern world."

The extent to which Anabaptists have influenced the political and social atmosphere of recent times is being increasingly recognised but their gradual leavening of all branches of the Church is often lost sight of. If one may dare hope that at this time of day all the great communions have learned that in matters of religion and conscience compulsion may not be used, then it is because the Anabaptists have placarded this truth before them. The Anabaptists have their direct descendants in the modern world, on both sides of the Atlantic. The Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren represented them at Amsterdam. Although so many English Nonconformists, including Baptists, are reluctant to acknowledge them as their forefathers, this lecture states boldly that all the English Free Churches are indebted to the Anabaptists and sets forth a number of facts which point to there being a direct connection between Anabaptism on the Continent and the rise of Dissent in this country.

So much new material for assessing and interpreting the left wing of the Reformation has recently come to light and is here carefully listed that the pamphlet is invaluable for its bibliography alone. There is, however, to be found here as well a masterly outline of the movement, a timely placing of it in the oecumenical

setting and a spirited defence of its conception of the catholicity of the Church. Along with the author's other pamphlet, *The Baptist Movement in the Reformation and Onwards,* this lecture greatly helps to remedy the gaps in the literature readily accessible.

K. C. DYKES.

Sunshine and Shadows, by Joseph Willmott. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 2s. 6d.).

This attractively illustrated and well written booklet tells the story of a century of Baptist witness in Hounslow, Middlesex. The Minutes of the present church go back to 1868, but there was certainly a Baptist cause earlier than this. It was perhaps—though Mr. Willmott does not make the suggestion—a fruit of the work of what from 1825 to 1859 was known as the West London and Berkshire Association; this certainly included churches in Staines, Uxbridge and West Drayton. Much steadfast devotion under difficult and often disheartening circumstances is recorded in these pages. There have been eleven ministries in the last sixty years, and one of them was of twelve years' duration! But Mr. Willmott is able to end his story on a cheerful note. "At no time in all its long history have the prospects of our church been brighter than they are today."

The Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan. (Cherry Tree Book, Withy Grove Press, Ltd. 2s.).

This unabridged reprint of Bunyan's classic is of the format and size so popular at the moment. It is sponsored by the Kemsley Newspapers Ltd., who are to be congratulated on their enterprise. A few obsolete words are explained in footnotes. It is to be hoped that this attractive edition will catch the eye of many new readers and that those who already know the riches of the book will aid in its circulation.

ANNUAL MEETING.

At the Baptist Historical Society's annual meeting, held in Dr. Williams's Library on Thursday, 28th April, 1949, tea was followed by the transaction of business under the chairmanship of the President, Mr. S. J. Price. Reports were presented by the Secretary and Treasurer, and the officers and committee were re-elected. A greatly appreciated address on "Some Implications of History for Theology" was delivered by Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, of New College, London.