

some of Jesus' parables have strong allegorical elements" (p. 86), or when he builds on Is 26:17 ff. in order to establish the doctrine of the resurrection.

There is no questioning the fact that the book gives some valuable information to beginners who are unaware of the archaeological discoveries of the last forty years which have some bearing on the Fourth Gospel. But, again, as is also the case with the reporting of the philosophical currents of the first century which must inform an intelligent reading of the Gospel, the total effect serves more for caricature than for understanding. Can it really be claimed that it is actually the *philostraton* mentioned in Jn 19:13 that "can be seen and walked on" now (p. 13) ? And does it help matters to say that "neither in the rabbis nor in the Stoics was there 'any kick, any joy.' All was dull as ditchwater" (pp. 109, 110) ?

Unlike some of Hunter's other attempts to introduce a large reading public to the advances of Biblical scholarship, this book is not a reliable guide to the Gospel according to John. In fact, Hunter seems to be not at all concerned with what John is concerned with.

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Kuitert, H. M., *The Reality of Faith*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968. 213 pp. \$ 5.50.

The main task of the author's book, *The Reality of Faith*, is to focus on the antimetaphysical trend in contemporary theology, as found in existential theology. Such existentialists as Bultmann, Fuchs, Ebeling, and Gogarten are given consideration in the study. Kuitert also briefly analyzes Van Buren's neo-positivism, since it shares with existential theology a common concern for subjectivism. It becomes quite evident, as the author's study progresses nicely to a realistic and most persuasive conclusion, that he wishes to extract the best thoughts of existential theology as they are expressed in man's existence and his need to experience redemption "here" and "now." However, the weaknesses of existentialism are pointed out and could best be explained by its peculiar hermeneutics, which Kuitert discusses in his chapter, "The Problem of Hermeneutics." With keen perception Kuitert penetrates the philosophical jargon of existentialism and crystallizes the ultimate error of existential theology. Paraphrasing this theology, he says, "Faith is genuine faith only as it lets itself be founded by God Himself in the here and now; faith fails whenever it looks to what someone else in the past has said about God" (pp. 112, 113).

Whatever Kuitert may imply about existential theology, he wishes the reader to grasp the idea that there is a legitimate motive in the efforts of this theology, *i.e.*, its driving concern to *apply* the redemptive

message to man's existence. The reader soon gathers from the book that classic Protestant orthodoxy with its metaphysical system cannot leave the conflict with existentialism unscathed. If orthodoxy has erred, it has done so in overstressing the *content* of the Christian tradition as universally valid truth or dogma at the expense of ignoring man's need to encounter "here" and "now" in his own existence the message of this content.

After revealing the weak and strong points of existential theology and orthodoxy, Kuitert steers a clear course between and beyond the two. In his chapter, "Revelation Within the Mold of History," he shows how the reality of faith exists in the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future by saying, "In memory, one celebrates the past in its significance for the present and future, . . . and insinuates the past into his own life as the fuel for his hope" (p. 181). Thus, in one sweep he masterfully pulls the rug out from under existential theology's persistent concern for the all-inclusive "here and now." But he wishes us to remember that orthodoxy has received a favor by being reminded of the need to stress the application of the *heerigma* to man's existence in the present.

With skill Kuitert weds the objective and subjective in theology: He shows how NT content is handed down in the diversity of witnesses as the text becomes a transmission of *events* which were about human *beings*. This approach is one of his ways to steer between and beyond both existential theology and orthodoxy.

Kuitert does orthodoxy a favor by pointing out that "the fierce fidelity to the Christian tradition that orthodoxy exemplifies can be twisted into a legalism . . ." (p. 171). The reviewer disagrees with the author when he says that Christian truth cannot exist as unchangeable, eternal formulations (p. 171). Here he falls into the trap of existentialism itself with its relativism and subjectivism, which snare he has endeavored to deny in his study.

A very commendable service that Kuitert has performed has been to show that the dialogue between antimetaphysical and metaphysical theology involves real pragmatics. Thankfully he has translated this dialogue into understandable language. Kuitert's book deserves attentive consideration from every serious theologian and Bible student since he does not pursue a one-track theology but one which extracts the best of the two systems under discussion and formulates a new and significant theological dynamic.

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Lambert, W. G. and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. xii + 198 pp. 70sh.

This edition of the oldest preserved Old Babylonian epic with