

BOOK REVIEWS

Adamson, James B. *The Epistle of James*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976. 227 pp. \$8.95.

This is the first of the new replacements in this series. The original edition of the commentary on James (included in *The Epistles of James and John*) was written by Alexander Ross in 1954 and is less than half the size of the present edition. A new feature with this new edition is the replacement of the American Standard Version by the commentator's own translation as the basis of the comments.

As expected, the author accepts James, the Lord's brother, as the author; and thus he dates the book before 62. One of his chief aims is to combat the "fatal error" that the Epistle completely lacks "any cohesion of thought or design" (p. 11). He is also concerned to correct the view that the Christianity depicted in James is peculiar and unorthodox. Since the thrust of James's writing is not theological but practical, one should not expect the full exposition of the Christian faith. The author provides a helpful section at the beginning on the theology of James.

Along with the text and commentary, excursuses treating in detail certain crucial passages are provided after each chapter. A select bibliography, outline of the book, and indexes of subjects, persons, and scriptural references add to the usefulness of this volume. Unfortunately, no periodical articles are included in the bibliography.

The author admits his debt to Ropes, Hort, and Mayor; and throughout the commentary these names appear, though not always to indicate agreement. While Adamson provides his own translation without giving the Greek text, the Greek is nevertheless obviously the basis of his commentary. The commentary is characterized by careful and detailed analysis of the text. Also, much acquaintance of Jewish literature is indicated by frequent reference to it.

In Jas 1:3 Adamson would emend the verse to read *hupomonē* instead of *hupomonēn*, so that the verse reads, "You must realize that your approbation is accomplished by constancy in endurance." The usual translation reads, "For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." On Jas 2 he quotes with approval Hort, who says that James is not pleading "for faith plus works . . . but for faith at work" (p. 130). In Jas 4:2, instead of *phoneuete*, "you kill," he has accepted the conjecture of Erasmus, *phthoneuete*, "you are envious." He interprets 4:5 to refer to sinful propensities of the human spirit; and thus he translates, "Or do you suppose it is an idle saying in the scriptures that the spirit that has taken its dwelling in us is prone to envious lust?" (p. 165).

Obviously, readers will find interpretations with which they will disagree, but all will undoubtedly agree that there is much profit to be gained from this carefully written commentary.