

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God.
By George Eldon Ladd. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids
3, Mich. 1959. \$2.75.

The author, professor of Biblical Theology in Fuller Theological Seminary, is already well-known for his work on the subject of the kingdom. This latest book contains transcriptions of messages which the author delivered in pulpits and conferences. It is a mixed presentation. There is truth and half-truth; definition and fuzziness; clarity and confusion. The chief criticism of this work is that the author does not go far enough in his delineations. His charts on pages 28, 35, 38 and 42 are helpful but he needs one more to complete the picture, for there should be included a pretribulation rapture and more emphasis on Israel's future earthly kingdom.

The book is posttribulational and non-dispensational. This accounts for the fuzziness and occasional misrepresentation of the dispensational view. For instance, dispensationalism does not teach that the field is the church (p. 57) or that literalism cannot involve figurative language (pp. 84 ff.). The author seems to have some lingerings of dispensationalism as shown in his discussion of the kingdom, the Church and Israel. He rightly says that the Church began at Pentecost and that strictly speaking Israel is not the Church, but he also declares that there is only one people of God. Although Israel is not the Church on page 117, "all Israel" he says refers to the Church on page 119!

The future aspects of the kingdom are given only slight treatment. The present is emphasized, an emphasis which dispensationalists are often apt to slight. However, because of his imbalance the author is forced to give too much emphasis to receiving the Kingdom rather than the King, and because of his definition of kingdom as God's rule he is forced to rule out any excessive quantity of evil in the present

aspect of the kingdom. This leads him to a most ludicrous discussion of leaven in the parable of Matthew 13. The nearest to a definition of leaven that he comes to is this: "Leaven is not here a symbol of evil; but unleavened bread was a symbol of haste" (p. 61). Apparently leaven in the parable is the slowness of the sure growth of the kingdom. But the week long feast of unleavened bread is unrelated to haste; and surely the Lord did not warn His disciples to beware of the slowness of the Pharisees; and Paul did not mean that we should "keep the feast with the haste of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8). Leaven means evil in Matthew 13 as elsewhere; only such a meaning completely embarrasses the author's thesis. As stated before, he simply needs to go one step farther in his scheme.

While one cannot agree with these vital matters in the book, there are many truths clearly stated in it. For this reason it is worth reading, but it must be read with careful discernment.