

IS THE RAPTURE NEXT? By Leon J. Wood. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1956. 120 pp. \$2.00.

Written by the professor of Old Testament as a result of study by a group of faculty members of the Grand Rapids Baptist Theological Seminary and Bible Institute, this little volume affirms the pretribulation rapture view. The plan of the book is very simple: the author first discusses the passages of Scripture which supply the stronger reasons for saying that the rapture will precede the tribulation; then he studies those passages which posttribulationists generally use to support their viewpoint and concludes that they do not in reality contradict the first group of passages. In other words, he concludes that the "Yes" passages say yes very clearly and the "No" passages do not really say no. The "Yes" passages discussed are those relating to the tribulation itself, those related to the doctrine of imminency, and pertinent sections in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The "No" passages include those connected with the concept of the "end", the Olivet discourse, and Old and New Testament teaching on the resurrection.

The procedure of the book has obviously determined the slant of its contents; that is, the slant is Biblical rather than theological, and in large measure the book is a discussion of various interpretations of the specific Scriptures involved in the question. In many respects this approach is desirable, for it will undoubtedly commend the book to the interest of a larger circle of Christians. The straightforward simplicity of both procedure and discussion makes this a book which one can put confidently into anyone's hands. There is one area, however, which this approach does not include, and that is the reëdification of the doctrine of the church to the pretribulation rapture. The author deals with it somewhat on pages 20-28, but much more could be made of ecclesiology as a doctrine and its bearing on the question.

This would of course involve dispensationalism which, though not deliberately avoided in the book, is not prominent. Possibly this could be because of a publisher's request rather than an author's choice, but someone needs to say clearly that beyond any question one of the principal reasons why there is so much posttribulational premillennialism abroad today is simply because there has been an abandonment of dispensational premillennialism.

All of the discussions of specific Scripture passages are extremely fair. Although the author has not attempted to document the arguments of either ~~argument~~ <sup>side</sup> from their literature, he has stated them fairly and summarized them accurately and in many cases with helpful conciseness. The discussion of Revelation 3:10 struck the reviewer as being particularly well put, while it was felt that there might have been more detail given concerning the identification of the Restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2. Mr. Wood follows Dr. Schuyler English's suggestion that apostasia means departure in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and thus is a reference to the rapture. His argument from the context is very convincing.

This book is highly commended as a straightforward Scriptural defense of pretribulationism. Some will say that it is not complete, but for its purpose and audience this could scarcely ever be a serious objection. The only incompleteness is its lack of Scripture index. Otherwise, it will undoubtedly fill a need for a large number of believers which more technical books will not meet.

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