

Book Reviews

The proceedings are divided into four sections. The first and largest section comprises papers concerned with disease in the Bible. The topics covered are wide ranging and include military medicine, obstetrics, and the nose and its disorders, as witnessed in the Bible. The second section is devoted to biblical psychology and the soul, and so inevitably strikes a philosophical chord. Miracles and faith healing are grouped with contributions relating to medical plants in the Bible to form the third section. A miscellany of topics that do not fit into any of the three previous sections makes up the fourth section.

As can be seen, the subject matter, although centred on the Bible, is extensive and shows the degree to which medical practice and thinking had developed in ancient Israel. It is pointed out in the editorial that, although the symposium was concerned with medicine and not theology, it is impossible to divorce one from the other when considering medicine in the Bible. "There is one sole God, and in man body and soul are closely interpenetrated and constitute one whole" (p. 11). This aspect pervaded all the contributions although there was some inequality in the level of the papers offered. It was disappointing that in a collection of papers dedicated to medicine in the Bible only one contributor dealt with the subject in the New Testament (pp. 134–145). One would have expected that part of the Scriptures to receive rather more attention, especially since the third Gospel and Acts are attributed to St Luke, the physician.

This publication, however, is an important contribution to the study of medicine in the Bible, especially the Hebrew scriptures and as such a fitting record of an important symposium. It is to be hoped that proceedings of future symposia on medicine in Biblical times will appear as a witness to international scholarship in this area of medical history which transcends all barriers – in the words of the psalmist quoted by the chairman of the symposium, Professor Leibowitz, in his closing remarks "Behold how good and pleasant it is for the brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

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MAXWELL FINLAND *et al.* (editors), *The Harvard Medical Unit at Boston City Hospital. (History of the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory and the Harvard Medical Services from their founding until 1974)*, University Press of Virginia for the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1982–1983; vol. I, 8vo, pp. xvii, 903, illus; vol. II (parts 1 and 2), 8vo, pp. xxvii, 1441; \$50.00 per volume.

"Harvard Medical Unit" – "Boston City Hospital" – "Thorndike Memorial Laboratory" – these indeed are names to conjure with. But a conjuration of well over 2000 pages in three superbly produced volumes carries, at any rate at first sight – and weight, just the faintest suspicion of overkill. There are, of course, alleviations such as large print, and many pages of illustrations of the staff of the service throughout the decades. The pictorial evidence shows a growth in numbers of staff of the "second and fourth medical services" from thirteen in 1935 to fifty-eight in 1973; women, so far as can be judged, appear for the first time in 1939. There are chapters on fathers and sons; on matings within the unit; and a list extending over twenty-five pages of "Medical Schools where Members of Harvard Medical Unit have held Professorships". There is another collection of photographs (pp. 771–797) headed "A constellation of stars", which runs to 122 individuals.

From the standpoint of medical history, as opposed to personalia, the main value of this production lies in Volume I, edited by Maxwell Finland, entitled the "History", to which I shall return, after merely noting that Volume 2, parts 1 and 2, totalling 1441 pages, are composed entirely of autobiographical, or in some cases biographical notes, on over 800 men and women who have been members of the unit. These are short, for the most part mercifully so; but there are gleams of interest, such as the revelation by Lewis Thomas that he could earn more by writing poems for the *Atlantic Monthly* than by giving blood for transfusions. More typical entries are exemplified by one who says "I have only the faintest memories of . . ."; and another who opens like a parody of Cold Comfort Farm – "I was the first-born, on a northern Nebraska farm in subzero weather between two paralyzing blizzards, to largely self-educated, older pioneer homesteaders". (What a memory!) Clearly, these two volumes will appeal more to

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veterans of the unit than to outsiders; but my own sampling of them at least gave me the impression of a happy ship.

Not a ship without legitimate pride, however; and in his Preface Dr Maxwell Finland (who has done so much to give America its leadership in the field of infectious diseases) displays the engaging American habit of "coming right out with it". For example, "Since it is most unlikely that any similarly productive institution had existed in the history of medicine or is ever likely to be recreated, it seemed important to record in some detail the history of the Harvard Medical Unit and of the people who were responsible for its attainments and contribution to scientific and clinical medicine and its leadership in the United States and to some extent throughout the world. And who could be more suited to this task than the three editors of this History, each of whom toiled in the vineyard and lived to see its fruits ripen, multiply and be reseeded far and wide." It turns out that the "three editors" are W. B. Castle, C. S. Davidson, and – yes – Maxwell Finland.

From the opening of the Boston City Hospital in 1864, there had been a close connexion with Harvard Medical School; and in the early years of the present century the academic affiliations became closer with the beginnings of clinical investigation. In 1923, the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory was opened, with Dr Peabody as the first Director. He was succeeded by G. R. Minot (1928–48), W. B. Castle (1948–63), and Maxwell Finland (1963–68). By this time, the future of the association between Harvard Medical School and the Boston City Hospital had begun to be uncertain; and indeed it ended in 1974, with the decision on the part of the Boston City Hospital to concentrate its association on Boston University. The move of the Thorndike away from the Boston City Hospital brings a touch of regret to Finland's concluding note.

During the Peabody-Minot-Castle era, there were discoveries in haematology, of which the liver treatment of pernicious anaemia was only the first and greatest, coming shortly after the discovery of insulin in Toronto, to which Minot owed his survival. The systematic account of the activities of the Division of Hematology is written by Castle, and followed by reminiscences of work in the division by Geneva A. Daland. This pattern is generally followed in the accounts of the other seven divisions – cardiology, infectious diseases, endocrinology, diabetes, gastroenterology, pulmonary diseases, and nephrology. To divide the core of the book among seventeen authors was perhaps taking a risk; but in general the editors have got away with it. The variations in style can be refreshing, and there is a common strain of loyalty to the institution which each of the authors served. This is not a book which distils much in the way of a lesson from its material. But it is interesting to read; and between the lines one can admire the fruits of union between individual inspiration and the prevalent New England work ethic.

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