

Concordia Theological Monthly



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BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

A PROTESTANT MANIFESTO. By Winfred E. Garrison. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 1952. 207 pages, 6×9. \$2.75.

If the purpose of this book were to define the issues between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in the political arena or the social area, its author would still be the man for the job. His previous books and innumerable articles prove his competence in both fields. From 1921 until his retirement in 1943, Dr. Garrison was professor of church history in the University of Chicago and in the Disciples Divinity House. For twenty-eight years he has served as literary editor of the *Christian Century*. To the readers of that journal he is a well-known and highly respected acquaintance. In this book his chief concern is, however, religion, a subject on which he can likewise speak with the authority of broad and intimate knowledge.

In view of his own definition of Protestantism, Dr. Garrison naturally does not expect the reader to agree with all that he says, for his definition implies the right to disagree. Let no man, however, be deceived by his insistence on the privilege of using that right. By pointing up the sources of strength in divided Protestantism, he renders an important service of charity to Roman Catholic writers. He cautions them to avoid a misinterpretation of Protestant division — a mistake to which they have been prone ever since the appearance of Bishop Bossuet's *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*.

Protestants, be it said, need not blush with embarrassment over their divided state in view of the character of Roman Catholic unity, accurately described in a letter to the *Christian Century* (February 20), in which the writer confesses: "The Roman Catholic Church, of which I am a member, could scarcely find two members who understand their religion in an identical mode. The unity of Catholics is the unity of children in a family who accept everything their parents teach them, on the basis of 'father and mother know best.'" In Rome's case that means "the Pope knows best." Protestants, including Dr. Garrison, will have none of that. L. W. SPITZ

THE COMING-OF-AGE OF CHRISTIANITY. Edited by Sir James Marchant. Henry Regnery Company, Chicago. 1951. 190 pages, 5½×8½. \$2.50.

This is a symposium written by a group of men intimately associated with the ecumenical movement. Two of them are Americans — Kenneth

Scott Latourette and Henry Pitney Van Dusen — and the others are from England and Scotland. As is the case in any symposium, the essays are uneven and often duplicate or contradict each other. The general approach is historical, not in the sense of presenting original research, but employing historical insights for the explication of the contemporary situation of the Church.

The theme of the book is perhaps best summarized in the closing paragraphs of Dr. Sydney Cave's essay (p. 91): "Our conception of our Lord may be enlarged as we call to mind what others have found in Him. Not only the achievements but the errors of the past have their lessons for us. . . . The living Christ whose Spirit is present with His people is the Christ of whose words and deeds the Gospels speak. . . . With Him we may have a communion which death will not interrupt but make complete. In Him the Church is one; in Him is still the answer to the deepest needs of men."

There are many statements in the book with which our readers will not agree, notably in the essay by Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's (pp. 43—63), who reflects essentially the historical-critical approach to the Gospels and to the ancient creeds. Much in Bishop Neill's and President Van Dusen's essays on the ecumenical situation (pp. 143—169, 169 to 190) represents an uncritical appraisal of the ecumenical movement, though Neill does admit that "there have been periods *in the past* when God has called our fathers for the sake of truth to separate" (p. 149; italics mine), and Van Dusen expresses the judgment that "we stand near the end . . . of an era whose underlying tendencies were centripetal" and seeks to evaluate this phenomenon in terms of church union (p. 179).

In general, the book displays the strengths and the weaknesses of the ecumenical movement out of which it has come. JAROSLAV PELIKAN

NIETZSCHE AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS. R. M. Thompson. Philosophical Library, New York. 104 pages, 7×5. \$2.75.

We cheerfully recommend this absorbing and stimulating apologetic to all who desire a brief, simple, but also thorough analysis of the perverse ethical fundamentals of Nietzsche's pessimism depicted against the background of the sane and sober ethics of Christianity. The author reaches the conclusion that "Christianity is supreme as a way of life . . . that it is an ethic of love and develops the highest type of man; and finally that Christ is still *terminus ad quem et terminus a quo*." Nietzsche's influence still prevails in many areas, and the ethical principles of the Christian religion are still represented as weak, morbid, and unable to satisfy man's highest strivings. Over against this false view, Professor Thompson demonstrates that Nietzsche's philosophy is an intolerable insubordination to the divine Law resulting in total ruination of mankind if consistently applied, while the Christian faith and morality constitute a divine dynamic which exalts and blesses the human race. Here is a fine apologetic indeed!

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE WINGS OF FAITH. By H. V. Martin. Philosophical Library, New York. 1952. 132 pages, 5×7½. \$2.75.

Dr. Martin, author of a previous work on Kierkegaard (reviewed in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXII, 463), attempts in this brief volume to employ the insights of Kierkegaard for an interpretation of the nature and meaning of Christian faith. In doing so he relates himself to other interpretations and evaluates them in the light of what Kierkegaard has taught him.

He is therefore opposed to Thomism because its view of revelation is rationalistic (p. 21); to Hegel because "he conceived man as primarily a thinker" (p. 25); to Schleiermacher because he "tends toward a pantheistic mysticism which regards God only as immanent" (p. 27); to the Ritschlians because "it is upon the historic personality of Jesus that they dwell rather than upon the historical factor in His person as the God-man" (p. 77).

In opposition to all these viewpoints, Martin finds himself in agreement with Kierkegaard, who, in turn, "is true to the Lutheran standpoint" (p. 53). And there is much in the positive sections of this book that a Lutheran will read with joy. Thus, "Christ is not revelation in His historical person; nor is He revelation in His nature as Divine. Christ is only divine revelation in the unity of His historical-eternal nature" (p. 79).

Those who classify Kierkegaard and Kierkegaardians as rank subjectivists will be surprised to read: "In Christianity, it is a fundamental truth that faith and revelation correspond and conform the one to the other. The *fides qua creditur* (the faith by which it is believed) and the *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed) are as congruous as the human hand in a skintight glove" (p. 15). "Humanly speaking, we can never be so sure of our faith that we can take it for granted. . . . But the doubt with which Christian faith lives in tension is not doubt about the reality of God or of Christ" (p. 91). And he concedes, with Brunner, that in Kierkegaard the Church "does not get a fair deal" (p. 127).

Though disappointingly brief and somewhat cryptic in spots, Martin's book is heartening testimony to the influence which Luther is having over non-Lutheran theology and to the correctives Luther's theology provides for an interpretation of Kierkegaard.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

HANDBOOK OF DENOMINATIONS. By Frank S. Mead. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 1951. 207 pages, 6¼×9¼. \$2.75.

There are several ways of writing a book on American churches. One is to seek to interpret them in relation to each other and to the author's own interpretation of the Christian faith; this method has the advantage of being integrated and of helping the student to evaluate the denominations involved, but unless it is done with care and objectivity, it can become mere polemics. Another way is to present the churches, one by one, without making value judgments, and to leave the task of evaluation to

the reader; this method has less difficulty remaining fair than does the former, but it has greater difficulty being relevant.

Dr. Mead, formerly editor of the *Christian Herald*, chooses the latter approach. He has succeeded in packing together within the covers of one book an amazing amount of information about the churches, large and small, that make up American Christendom. The distinctive doctrines, the polity, the history, and the statistical data about each church are presented in succinct form, and the reader can easily discover what the book has to say on one or another group, thanks to a comprehensive table of contents and a detailed index.

Throughout, the author manages to keep his own evaluations to himself. Readers of most denominations will be quite well satisfied with what he has said about them. A few mistakes appear; e. g., the author is not aware of the fact that the Norwegian Synod maintains its own college and seminary at Mankato, Minn. (p. 121); he does not refer to the significant shift in the liturgical and theological views of many Unitarians in recent years (p. 179); Muhlenberg did not really come from the University of Halle (p. 114); "*depositorium fides*," p. 167, should be "*depositorium fidei*."

But it is remarkable that in a work of this scope so few minor omissions should be present. Mead's volume will be a handy book of reference for all who are compelled to deal with American denominations.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

PREACHING FROM PROPHETIC BOOKS. By Andrew W. Blackwood. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville, 1951. 224 pages, 5¾ × 8. \$2.50.

Homileticians can write books about the technique of preaching. Great preachers can publish their sermons. But not many men can define or illustrate practices and techniques in the area that lies beyond the rules of homiletics. In this book Dr. Blackwood attempts to describe the discerning of "preaching values," this time in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. He treats several of the Prophets—Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel. He takes each man's message and points out the over-all emphasis and significance. Then he turns to the individual areas of the prophecy and singles out special thoughts suitable for preaching. The book will be useful, not so much as a source book of sermon themes from the Prophets, as it will be a stimulus toward digging into the Scriptures—anywhere—for its great themes of preaching. Sometimes as asides, sometimes directly, Dr. Blackwood shares from his vast resources of knowledge concerning specific areas of the ministry, or preaching, and of writing sermons. Where pastors adhere to the church year for their common services, the mode of finding and utilizing Scripture values in free texts will pertain chiefly to evening services. This volume should help to encourage preachers to utilize direct Biblical themes for many of their courses and series of sermons.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE CRAFT OF SERMON CONSTRUCTION. W. E. Sangster. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1951. 208 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. \$3.00.

This volume is full of incisive and experienced comments on preaching. As such it will serve well to revive flagging spirits of preachers. The author seeks to detail certain elements of the construction of sermons, by means of classifying them according to "subject matter, structural type, psychological method." Preaching in the liturgical tradition tends to operate with fewer options, dispensing with several of the author's uses of texts and certainly with the "subversive" method. The analysis of structural type, as exposition, argument, faceting, categorizing, and analogy, is very useful. The author is a British Methodist and is known for *The Craft of Sermon Illustration* previously reviewed in these columns.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE ROYALTY OF THE PULPIT. By Edgar DeWitt Jones. Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1951. XXX and 447 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$. \$5.00.

Himself a noted preacher, Edgar DeWitt Jones publishes this volume on the outstanding preachers who contributed lectures to the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching presented annually since 1872 (with four exceptions). He groups the contributors under categories describing their eminence, their profession, and their place in the theological and social changes that have occurred during the eighty years. His material is rich in detail on the personality and background of the lecturers. He also seeks to give an appraisal of the major lecture series. The volume is interesting for its over-all scope as well as for the recommendation it gives to certain units which might otherwise be neglected, thus the lectures of N. J. Burton, *In Pulpit and Parish*. Appendices furnish biographical data on the lecturers and full bibliographies.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

PSYCHOLOGY, RELIGION AND HEALING. By Leslie D. Weatherhead. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 1951. 543 pages, 6×9 . \$5.00.

This stout volume owes its length to the fact that it includes the author's Yale lectures on preaching of 1949 and the substance of his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of London. The author was a chaplain in the First World War and since that time has been noteworthy for his ministry in London, which has concerned itself explicitly with healing as well as preaching. He begins with a sketch of the healing ministry of Jesus. He defines a miracle: "a law-abiding event by which God accomplishes His redemptive purposes through the release of energies which belong to a plane of being higher than any with which we are normally familiar" (p. 37), and this "plane of being" he calls Christ's kingdom. The author's special interest led him to some unusual interpretations. However, he believes that demoniac possession was not simply illness, but involved demoniac forces which have their contemporary

counterpart. Useful reviews of early and modern psychological methods of healing follow, and an extensive survey of "Modern Methods of Healing Through Religion." Two major sections propose to answer the questions: "Do modern psychological methods of healing need religion?" and "Do modern religious methods of healing need psychology?" The author's conclusion is that the integrated personality needs pastoral and medical co-operation for genuine healing. The work is replete with case studies of the author's or from literature of actual healings.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

WHY CLOSE COMMUNION? Tract by the Rev. Don Deffner, University Lutheran Chapel, 2740 College Avenue, Berkeley 5, Calif. 16 pages, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 6$. 10 cents. Quantity price upon application.

Here is a well-done tract by one of our young student pastors on a timely subject, one that is deserving of wide use in our tract racks or publicity programs. The author uses a fresh and tactful approach to a subject that is considered quite delicate and loveless by many. Our student pastors in particular might take notice and avail themselves of this help. The definition of open Communion might be corrected. To our knowledge the proponents of that procedure do not invite all worshipers to participate, but only those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The dress of the tract is very neat.

O. E. SOHN

THE COUNSELOR IN COUNSELING. By Seward Hiltner. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 188 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$. \$2.50.

If the primary purpose of pastoral counseling were to lead the counselee to clarify and solve his problem and thus obtain a new lease on life, this book would be a distinct help. On the basis of numerous case histories the author supplies the pastor with the techniques of counseling, giving special direction that he keep himself and his own interests out of the picture and concentrate on the parishioner. The matter is discussed under fourteen heads, namely, action, externals, shyness, knowledge, flexibility, concentration, timing, embarrassment, charm, hostility, convictions, friendship, empathy, and perspective in counseling.

However, one misses that which constitutes Christian counseling. With all the fine technical advice here given, one must not forget that it is not our technique, but the Word of the Great Physician which heals, referring here chiefly to mental and spiritual problems. Our basic objective in counseling must be to lead our parishioners to Calvary's Cross, whose message of full pardon not only creates or rekindles joy and hope and courage, but fills the rejuvenated soul with determination to live unto Him who died for him and rose again. More important than the relief of temporary emotional strain is the achievement of a well-integrated spiritual and emotional life anchored in Christ Jesus. He who uses this book with that objective will find it a helpful tool towards a better counseling ministry.

O. E. SOHN

A HISTORY OF THE CURE OF SOULS. By John J. McNeill. Harper and Brothers, New York, c. 1951. XII + 371 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$5.00.

This scholarly work proposes to survey the "cure of souls" or provision for spiritual health provided by Israel, by pagan philosophy, by the religions of the East, and by the Church of the New Testament. Special chapters are allotted to historical phases of the subject and to the activity and philosophy of the various denominations of Christendom in the cure of souls. Frequently omitted in monographs of this nature, the Eastern Orthodox and Armenian Churches are included, and the author acknowledges the assistance of Father George Florovsky for it. The scope and accuracy of the work will impress itself upon the readers of this journal when we note that nearly fourteen pages (beginning p.163) are allotted to Luther and that Walther's *Pastorale* is summarized (p.188). The work will serve not merely the specialist, but every pastor who wishes to orient his task in the stream of religious concern and who wishes to provide from the experience and emphases of others. "The Books and Articles Consulted" (pp.331ff.) provide a useful bibliography for anyone entering upon personal studies or special phases. This work should prove definitive for many decades to come. Interesting is the continued attention given throughout the work to private confession and its variations.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

ASPECTS OF LIBERALISM. By L. Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids. 1951. 163 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. \$2.50.

The former president of Calvin Seminary here offers in printed form a series of lectures he delivered on liberal theology. While recognizing that Fundamentalist Christians can learn something from the social gospel, he rejects its basic presuppositions. He is appreciative of the insights that Karl Barth and his followers have brought into the nature of sin, but, like Van Til, he considers them liberals nevertheless. The book is not documented, and it contains numerous statements that are historically dubious. It seems too much to say that Gustaf Aulen and Nels Ferre are "greatly influenced by Barthianism" (p.141). Lutherans will wonder whether what is wrong with Modernism is its rejection of "that series of legal or judicial ideas that occupies such an important place in the revelation of redemption" (p.115). There is one glaring typographical error: "Preachers of 'the old-time religion' are in the habit of *expiating* on the death of Christ on the cross" (p.27; italics my own).

The book does show the continuing vigor of American Fundamentalist Calvinism, its strong emphasis upon the sovereignty of God and of the Bible, and its lack of emphasis upon the Church. JAROSLAV PELIKAN