Concordia Theological Monthly

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
Lehre und Wehre 1855–1930
Concordia Theological Monthly 1930–1955

DECEMBER — 1955
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.


This booklet is one in a new series, World Christian Books, designed to help those who teach and preach to understand the Christian message more fully. The author of the present volume, Assistant to the Professor of the New Testament at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, is one of the younger German scholars in the field.

There is much, very much, in this book that is helpful and constructive. At the same time it is a sample of the kind of witness which is weakened by the introduction of academic speculation. The discussion would be more effective without a section (pp.18--26) entitled, "The Tradition of the Words and Deeds of Jesus," where the claims of form critics are set forth as though they were beyond debate. In reading this portion the present reviewer was led to wonder whether this section was added for any other reason than the author's desire to show that he is a Wissenschaftler. At least, what he says detracts from Mark's witness to Jesus Christ and draws a veil over the person and work of our Lord.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMBANN


Both volumes are included in The Christian Faith Series, a series of religious books designed to bring to the general reader the work of major thinkers in today's theology. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr is consulting editor.

Professor Cherbonnier attempts to correlate the Biblical understanding of sin with the facts of modern life. He holds that sin, according to the Bible, is properly defined as misplaced allegiance or idolatry. He rejects the definition of the moralists who conceive of sin as breaking rules. Determinism is equally unacceptable—as foolish as freedom was to the Greeks. Original sin, he believes, is not a doctrine of Scripture but was introduced in Christian thought by St. Augustine and perpetuated by
the Reformers of the sixteenth century. The doctrine that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the sinner he regards as a simple variation of the Roman Catholic treasury of merit, differing from it only inasmuch as the source of the transferred merit is Christ alone, rather than the saints. To the author this doctrine is Pelagian. Thus the doctrine of the atonement becomes the criterion by which the basic value of this otherwise stimulating study must be judged. In spite of its merit in emphasizing the reality of sin in an age which scoffs at sin, Luther and Calvin would find it as inadequate as he has found their doctrine of sin and grace.

Pastor Jenkins is less concerned with the problem of the individual than with that of all believers collectively as the body of Christ. He attempts to speak of the nature and function of the church in a manner which the modern man can understand. As a Congregationalist it is quite natural that he should be particularly interested in the local church. This, however, does not imply that he has ignored the importance of the Church Universal. His interest in the ecumenical movement is noticeable throughout. The Lutheran reader will not find it difficult to detect Pastor Jenkins' Calvinism in his Christology as well as in his soteriology. On the other hand, Calvin himself might find it difficult to go along with his disciple on some points.

Both volumes present a challenge to the thinking theological reader.

L. W. SPITZ


This monograph on Holy Baptism is the third number of a series, published under the general title "Old and New Ways for a Living Church." The author treats the doctrine from the viewpoint of Reformed symbolism. In his opinion Holy Baptism is a symbol of the cleansing from sin, of the spiritual resurrection, and sanctification through faith in Christ (p. 10). It is of secondary importance and should not cause the church to be split into divisions. The epithet "holy" should not be applied to it, nor should those who differ from the current evangelical doctrine be styled "Sacramentarians." The writer argues against both Lutheran orthodoxy and Baptist overemphasis. He holds that Baptism is justifiable as establishing the boundary line between the church and the world; infant Baptism is defensible especially as symbolizing the reception of children into the outer court of the church for their actual reception into it later through faith in Christ after due instruction (pp. 13 ff.). Where baptized children are rightly instructed in the Christian faith, they should not be rebaptized. But where Christian instruction is neglected and enlightened adults desire rebaptism as a confession of their living faith, they should be rebaptized by immersion (p. 25). The author himself was thus rebaptized (p. 7). It is only by tolerating the varying opinions that church unity can be maintained (ibid.). True believers may form
"cells" for their mutual edification and the celebration of Holy Communion, the pastor attending as an inactive witness. These are some of the viewpoints which the author develops, based largely on misapplied exegesis.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER


The editor of the well-known Hibbert Journal, Dr. Stephens Spinks, wrote seven of the thirteen chapters of this book; E. L. Allen and James Parkes each contributed three. The result is a well-rounded, comprehensive account of religion in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland in the twentieth century, written against the Victorian background.

The chapters which Dr. Allen contributed deal with the relationship between British theology and foreign religious movements. Dr. Parkes contributed the chapters dealing with the relationships between the churches and social and ecumenical movements. The reaction of the churches to their environment, the arts, and the impact of two world wars, are some of the topics treated by Dr. Spinks.

A succinct summary of the present century written and edited by a man whose finger has been on the pulse of things theological, philosophical, and political can be of great value. The present volume is such a work. Names of prominent individuals, like Temple, Bell, Fisher, Lang, Toynbee, Buchman, Huxley, Niebuhr, and Oldham, appear on its pages. So do the names of some less prominent, yet significant individuals, like Drummond, Dearmer, and Frere. The conferences of the century from Lambeth to Edinburgh to Jerusalem to Stockholm and Amsterdam are reported. So are the movements in liturgy and hymnology. It is a rich and varied account which is presented.

The book is not always easy reading; it presupposes an acquaintance with the British scene — after all, it was written primarily for British readers as a volume in the Twentieth-Century Histories series. The work, however, is authoritative. Our church is showing an increasing interest in the religious scene in England. Those following these developments will welcome this presentation.

CARL S. MIEYER


The author, a Southern Baptist, expounds his theme in a threefold way: The nature of it, the promise of it, the hope of it. The bulk of the pamphlet consists of Scripture texts and quotations from a large assortment of authors. The presentation is, in the main, soundly Scriptural and expresses the unshaken convictions of the Christian faith; but we can
hardly assert unequivocally that the eating and drinking of Jesus with His own in the heavenly kingdom will be literal (p. 11). The closing paragraphs make applications full of comfort to Christians, surrounded as they are by death and bereavement.

HERBERT J. A. BOUMAN


Dr. Emile Cailliet, professor of Christian philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary since 1947, has packed much provocative and erudite learning into this volume. Anthropology, philosophy, theology, history, and ethics are discussed at such length that the area of Christian culture, as wide as it is, is relegated to the background to a considerable extent. The author speaks as a Christian; however, he has no compunctions about accepting the theory of evolution as it is propounded today. He devotes many pages to a learned and understanding discussion of Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and the Scholastics, but he has practically nothing to say regarding the important roles played by Luther and Calvin in the historical development of Christian culture. He fairly leaps from St. Thomas Aquinas to Immanuel Kant and thereby indicates that his approach is philosophical rather than theological. "Reformed theology," says Emile Cailliet, "reverted to scholasticism. As a result, the Aristotelian stagnation prolonged its influence on theology" (p. 263). Unlike some others, he does not say the same thing regarding Lutheran theology. Concerning twentieth-century Marxism and Communism, he says: "The Communist propaganda is summed up in a proclamation corresponding in our time to the kerygma of Apostolic Christianity. While the Apostolic preaching challenged the wisdom of this world, the Communist proclamation presents itself as being in line with human thinking at its best." (Page 226.) A few pages farther on he declares: "Many in the ministry today are part of the proletariat, and poor relatives at that. The danger that the ministry could in some ways be influenced by Marxism may become greater than that of its falling victim to the enticement of capitalism. The same is increasingly true of the teaching profession." (Page 233.)

When Dr. Cailliet discusses the need for the creation of a closer relationship of theology to Christian culture, he voices opinions which are held by many thinking Christians of our day. He refers to the fact that theology was called "the queen of the sciences" already in medieval times and regrets that theologians have become indifferent and even antagonistic to the cultural heritage of the church. Under such circumstances theology may stagnate and become largely a philosophy; in addition, much of this world's culture loses its Christian character and becomes secular. The author explains: "The reason Jesus impressed the secular order by his exclusiveness, if not by his hostility toward even the culture of his day
in its Jewish nature, is that he came primarily to proclaim a kingdom which is not of this world. Culture qua culture was not within the perspective of his mission.” (Page 68.) The author might have added that Jesus was under the Law of the Old Testament dispensation and that the Feast of Pentecost of the New Testament era was predestined to become the birthday of Christian culture. We quote further: “It is not that theology is obsolete, then, but that it still is, and for an unpredictable length of time, in the embryonic stage. Let it be added more forcefully still that such a lag should under no circumstances be taken as an excuse for theological isolationism or defeatism, especially in a day like this. Let rather the experience of the pre-Hitler type of ‘ivory-tower’ Lutheranism in Germany be a constant reminder and warning to us. Such misunderstanding, moreover, would only make for more theological stagnation and resulting sectarianism. Our culture has grown unevenly, in distorted or even monstrous ways, for want of that proper guidance and integration under God which only a well-established theology could give.” (Page 268.) Caillier closes his challenging book with the trenchant words: “The peace of the church is not the peace of the grave, but the peace of a great dawn. Theology is not a musty, obsolete, empty logicism, playing in the areas abandoned by science, but a vigorous discipline in the making, destined to become the keystone of the edifice of human knowledge—under God the Creator.” (Page 269.)

WALTER E. BUSZIN


The purpose of this booklet is to help lay people get the most out of their church membership. The four chapters carry the following titles: “Take Time for God”; “What the Church Gives to Its Members”; “What Church Members Can Do”; and “Invalid Excuses.” It would seem particularly appropriate and useful for church officers and for participants in the every-member canvass, as well as for Christian people who take their witness-bearing seriously. Such will find here many helpful suggestions on making the right approach and refuting the excuses of the indifferent.

O. E. SOHN


An excellent little volume of 67 comforting meditations based on texts from the Psalms, each followed by an appropriate prayer. As the title indicates, it is the author’s endeavor to help troubled souls find peace and rest in Him in whom alone restless human hearts can find succor from life’s mental and spiritual ills. Pastors will find it refreshing and stimulating for their bedside work.

O. E. SOHN

A brief tract which sets down the qualifications and regulations for ushers in Lutheran churches. It is issued by the League of Lutheran Ushers, which has a membership of some 800 in the St. Louis area. In places more explanation could have been given to render the material more useful to new ushers. When a reprint is to be made, attention might be given to proofreading.

O. E. SOHN


This brief treatise by the capable Austrian author is a penetrating study of the much-debated problem of the Christian woman's proper place in the work of the church. He begins with an inquiry into the various views as reflected in more recent (1902—42) church literature. Considerable space is devoted to a discussion of the relevance of Gal. 3:28, the author taking the negative position. The main section is a study of the loci classicus of this problem (1 Cor. 11:2-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tim. 2:11-15). This refreshing exegetical study is fortified with a summary of other New Testament statements, special attention being given to the term ἴσος εὐμμορφη and ἴσος ἐκκοιμηθεῖ. Chapter IV discusses the historical side of the problem, showing which functions of church work Christian women are permitted to perform since the days of the early church. The last chapter deals with "Theological Foundations for Church Practice." In it the author discusses the ministry of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, setting forth the relation of the office to the office-bearer with reference to the ordination of women and the content of the message as it concerns woman within the order of creation and redemption. Pertinent inferences for proper church practice are made. A bibliography of 82 titles is appended.

The author defends the Scriptural principle that woman, though the possessor of the royal priesthood as surely as the man, is enjoined by Holy Writ from proclaiming the Word and administering the Sacraments in the public assemblies of the believers and from having a part in the government of the church. We wonder, however, why the 1 Corinthians 14 passage was restricted to vv. 34-36, since in v. 37 the Apostle so emphatically asserts that his statements are the commandments (ἐντολαί) of the Lord, whereas he terms the woman's wearing of a head covering while prophesying a custom (συνήθεια, 1 Cor. 11:16), which is not described as binding.

O. E. SOHN
BOOK REVIEW


The gifted author, well known to a wide circle of readers through his biweekly column in the Lutheran Witness, here presents fifty-three concise chapel addresses which he as president of Concordia College in Portland, Oreg., delivered to his students. These brief talks have a bearing on various life situations as they confront not only the young men who are preparing themselves for the holy ministry, but young people generally. Dr. Coates has an enviable facility of saying important things in choice words and with heart-searching directness. Here is a fine gift book for young men and women, especially our college-going youth.

O. E. SOHN


This book aims to present a survey and evaluation of available but scattered information concerning the psychological process of creative thought in the stages of preparation, incubation, illustration, and revision. Chapter treatment is given also to the age of productivity, conditions for creative thought, and a program for creating thinking. The importance of the subject is indicated by the closing sentence of the book, namely: "The future progress of civilization depends on the quality of the creative thinking in the world during the years to come."

Educators will appreciate the suggested changes in courses of study, curricula, and teaching methods. Adults may profit from the suggested changes in their mode of living to favor more productive thought. Research workers and students of psychology, esthetics, literature, and art may derive benefit from this book. It is easy reading.

A. G. MERKENS


In the preface this veteran preacher expresses his fondness for preaching on Biblical characters and hopes that his sermons "may be of suggestion to other preachers." These twelve sermons take their cue from a very broad list. Thus "Seven Who Said No" include Joseph, Daniel, the three young men, Vashti, and Jesus. "Five Drunkards of the Bible" include Noah, Lot, Belshazzar, Amnon, and Solomon. The Gospel emphasis is sometimes omitted. The title sermon is evangelically the most explicit, but by means of analogy only.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER
BOOK REVIEW 957

MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. By Edith Lovell Thomas. New York: Abingdon Press, 1953. 160 pages. Cloth. $2.00

Miss Thomas' work in religious music education is widely known in Protestant circles. She has helped to raise the music standards of many a parish; her book reflects why she has met with apparent success. While her choice of texts and tunes often reflects a pronounced Romantic touch, it is heartening to hear her say: "The foundation of a sturdy character is laid when one's singing experience is built on the German chorale as one of its elements. Singers thus grounded have withstood many crises which would overpower weaker souls. The treasure of grand chorales which Protestants possess has come to us through the Lutheran tradition and is becoming more generally appreciated throughout all denominations with the years." (Page 54.) Again she says: "The building of these right relationships in emotion, thought, word, and action is powerfully helped or retarded by what and how we sing. What governs the selection of songs and hymns will be determined by what serves the singers best and what ministers to their growth in Christian character." (Page 67.) If the clergy of America would bear this in mind, many of our most serious problems in church music would soon be solved.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

BOOKS RECEIVED

(The mention of a book in this list acknowledges its receipt and does not preclude a further discussion of its contents in the "Book Review" section.)


