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Here we have a sympathetic and informative study of Martin Buber’s life and influence. Diamond shows that Buber is not to be fitted into any category, Hasidism, orthodoxy, etc., but that he rather goes his own way on many issues.

The ground of Buber’s thinking is the I-Thou relation. Diamond does a fine job of explaining and criticizing the implications of this dialogical thinking, which he claims is a middle position between absolutism and relativism. Those Protestants who would follow Buber, thinking that the I-Thou relation is an emphatic way of stressing fides specialis, would do well to read Diamond’s discussion which shows that to Buber theology at best is a necessary evil. But Buber, too, must theologize. He seems to imply that one must know or be aware of the I-Thou relationship before he can possess it. But then I-Thou becomes an object, an It. And so it would appear that every relation must be I-It before it can become I-Thou. Buber speaks of “meaning” in concrete I-Thou encounters.

In discussing Buber’s attitude toward the Bible, Diamond stresses his conservatism. Buber has indeed treated the Old Testament with a kind of reverence; but although Buber breaks with higher criticism on many counts, he holds against supernaturalism and explains it away dialogically (a tendency which Diamond finds also in Protestant neo-orthodoxy).

ROBERT D. PREUS


This is Wallace’s second study in Calvin’s theology. Once more he has succeeded in bringing the reader to a real understanding and appreciation of Calvin’s theological depth and insight. The book tells us almost as much about Calvin’s Christology and ecclesiology as about his doctrine of the Christian life, and this is as it should be, for the Christian’s life is in Christ and in the fellowship of the church. The first section of the book treats the sanctification of the church in the royal priesthood of Christ. Wallace then deals with the themes of self-denial, cross bearing, dying and rising with Christ (always with Christ as Pattern), the image of God, the Christian in the present world, church discipline, the sacraments, the fruits of faith, and many more themes.

Wallace works carefully and dispassionately, and he makes no attempt at criticism. This gives the book an enduring quality but also leaves something wanting. The facts speak pretty well for themselves, however, and we see both the strength and weakness of Calvin’s theology from Wallace’s discussions. More attention might have been given Calvin’s “Ecclesiastical Ordinances” (which reflect both his legalism and his failure to understand the distinction between Law and Gospel) because of their concrete effects on the lives of the people of Geneva. It is always important to see how one’s theology works out in practice.

ROBERT D. PREUS

Calvin regards the knowledge of the existence of God as innate; the problem of the knowledge of God, therefore, is the problem of revelation. "The idea of Deus absconditus is as native to Calvin's theology as to Luther's." God reveals Himself in His creative and providential activity, the opera Dei. However, to understand the opera Dei the oracula Dei are needed. The Scriptures are the Word of God, self-authenticated by their function as the living Word of God. God has revealed Himself in Scripture; Scripture's function is to teach us of God as Creator and Providence. In Christ alone can we know God. Christ humbled Himself and became obedient. "It is that humiliation of obedience which is the exhibitio gratiae Dei, the revelation of the grace of God." These are some of the thoughts detailed by Parker in his two parts: the Knowledge of the Creator; the Knowledge of the Redeemer. His work is a concise but thought-packed summary of one of Calvin's chief doctrinal emphases.

CARL S. MEYER


Kaufmann is a debunker. He turns his little gun in every direction and fires away. Almost every philosophical and religious position is his target, and he is bound to hit something. As a critic he is caustic and categorical, but helpful in pointing up the poverty and confusion in the views of many modern thinkers. But although the book is stimulating at first, after 300 pages of knocking and peashooting it grows a bit stale.

Kaufmann favors a Socratic type of philosopher, a poet with the imagination of an existentialist and the intellectual conscience of a G. E. Moore and the positivists. This may be a fine combination, but when it finds its acme of expression in a Nietzsche who in the name of insight makes mere declamations, one might well prefer a Kierkegaard or a Moore or abandon philosophy altogether.

In discussing religion Kaufmann favors Judaism over Christianity or Buddhism. He dislikes Christianity because of its dogmatism and its doctrine of hell, which he attacks throughout the book as vengeful and sadistic. He is particularly insistent on the ambiguity of the idea of God and of theology in general. He asks questions (What is God? What does it mean that God exists?) and feels he has made a point when they are not answered to his satisfaction. In return one is tempted to ask Kaufmann what he means when he says that to exist is to take up space. Significantly, Kaufmann says after his attack on Christianity that his book is vulnerable to slander by critics who are structure blind or myopic. Is this poisoning the wells, or isn't it?

ROBERT D. PREUS


The problem of church-state relations in Europe and America (chiefly North America) is a major theme which Hales develops in this story of the Roman Catholic Church from 1789 to the present. He finds the separation of church and state, religious toleration, and the support of democratic forms of government by the church highly commendable, although he says that the stand of Pope Pius IX in the Syllabus of 1864 is "logical." He endorses Dupanloup's explanation, borrowed from the Jesuits of the Civita Cattolica, of the "thesis" (the general proposition) and the "hypothesis" (a special application). Hales is not satisfied
with the settlement of 1815; to him the Napoleonic Concordat of 1801 is of greater value. Communism, the fifth great challenge to the Roman Catholic Church during its centuries-long history (the "Reformation" was the third), greatly complicates current church-state problems.

A number of points and interpretations might well be questioned. He favors, for instance, the payment of public funds to church-controlled schools. Hales' point of view throughout is that of a loyal but tolerant son of the church. Yet he is an able historian and an interesting writer. The chief stricture to be made is that he deals only incidentally, in general, with the Roman Catholic Church outside Europe and America, although the title of the book speaks of its history "in the modern world." Nevertheless, his treatment is outstanding.

CARL S. MEYER


The Abiding Word was the title chosen for two volumes published in grateful remembrance of God's goodness to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during the first century of its history. The doctrinal essays presented in these volumes are based on the writings of the fathers and founders of the Synod. The title implies that the essayists did not intend to bring any new doctrine but presented the doctrine of God's Word as it had been taught in the Synod's churches and schools during the first century — the theology of the Word. The present volume is proof that the Synod is determined to abide by the Word of God also in the second century, for the essays in this volume, like those in the two preceding it, are founded on "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."


This invaluable book excels in many respects. It is highly readable (unlike Cayré and some of the older patrologies) and makes patrology interesting. It is packed with copious and useful bibliographical data and in this respect goes far beyond any other manual or textbook. It is concise, pertinent, and informative.

Altaner offers the basic facts on every early Christian literary work which is either wholly or partially extant, including even hymnography and epitaphs. His discussions of the more significant church fathers and their literary achievements usually include (a) an account of their background and lives, (b) a list and description of their works, and (c) a summation and analysis of their doctrinal emphases. His studies take him into the sixth and seventh centuries. The almost total lack of tendentiousness in his discussions, even in his introduction to patrology and its place in Roman theology, makes for trustworthiness.

ROBERT D. PREUS

Here is another instructive, interesting, and readable biography of Berdyaev. The author traces thoroughly the background for Berdyaev's thought in the political, religious, and cultural climate of Russia, and he offers a detailed account of Berdyaev's life and spiritual development. Throughout his life we see Berdyaev's rebellious attitude toward every form of encroachment on man's liberty, whether it be the tsar or the Bolsheviks or the organized church. Although he thought himself an ardent and thoroughly Russian Christian, he was at the same time a most unorthodox one.

Vallon's discussion of Berdyaev's ideas on God, freedom, existence and being, and other motifs, illustrates Berdyaev's depth of thought but also the vastness of his heterodoxy. For instance, to Berdyaev God is love but is not omnipotent. This accounts for man's fall and for the fact that God had no control over it; it also implies a denial of original sin and of hell and an idealistic Christology. One hopes that Vallon has not made Berdyaev more unorthodox than he was. For instance, he says that Berdyaev sees no significance in the historical man Jesus. To prove this thesis he points to Berdyaev's immanentism; but this by itself is hardly conclusive.

ROBERT D. PREUS


As an active participant in the ecumenical movement since 1939 Bishop Neill has met many of the leading men and women in that movement. In Brothers of the Faith, which could be regarded as a companion volume to the History of the Ecumenical Movement of which he is co-editor, he conducts the reader along the receiving line of the men whom he regards as worthy of special honor. Beginning with the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 and ending with a hopeful look at the ecumenical future, he introduces the reader to John R. Mott, Archbishop Söderblom, Bishop Brent, Bishop Azariah, Archbishop Germanos, Archbishop Temple, Hendrik Kraemer, William Paton, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, D. T. Niles, and John XXIII. It would be misleading to say that the line forms from left to right. Readers may disagree on the propriety of the title Brothers of the Faith. It is a far cry from the theology of Mott to that of men like Kraemer and Bonhoeffer, not to mention Germanos and John XXIII. Though these men share a heartfelt longing for church union, they differ widely on the basis for it. A promising sign in the ecumenical sky, however, is a new appreciation of the importance of doctrine for true church union.

Prospective readers can ill afford to ignore this lively and authoritative presentation.

L. W. SPITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

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


Medieval and Renaissance Studies. By


The Proverbs for Today. By Thomas Coates. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing


What's Wrong with Gambling? By Richard Sommerfeld; 5 pages; tract; $2.00 a 100. The Christian View of Sex; by Harry G. Coiner; 17 pages; tract; $5.00 a 100. 6 Training Tasks of Christian Parents; by Oscar E. Feucht; 4 pages; tract; $2.00 a 100. 6 Teaching Tasks of Christian Parents; by Oscar E. Feucht; 5 pages; tract; $1.50 a 100. Parents, Stand-ins for God; by Oscar E. Feucht; 3 pages; tract; $1.50 a 100. Going Steady; by Alfred Paul Klausler; 13 pages; tract; $4.00 a 100. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; by Elmer A. Kettner; 11 pages; tract; $3.00 a 100. You're a Mother! by Beulah Kaul; 8 pages; tract; $3.00 a 100. A Catholic President?: The Predicament; by Carl S. Meyer; 10 pages; pamphlet; 5 cents each (100 or more, 4 cents each). Our Way of Worship; by R. Jungkuntz and R. Gehlke; 17 pages; pamphlet; 20 cents each (100 or more, 16 cents each). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960.