

# 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, Missouri 63118.*

**RELIGION IN ANCIENT HISTORY.** By S. G. F. Brandon. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969. xvi and 412 pages. Cloth. \$12.50.

If the first charge of a scholar is to further knowledge in his own field, his second duty is to disseminate that knowledge both in technical and popular form. Brandon admirably performs the latter function in these 25 essays dealing with the history and comparative study of religion. All of them have previously been published in *History Today*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, or *Horizon*. Most of the chapters deal with aspects of the Old or New Testament, although separate essays are devoted to Osiris, Akhenaten, the Gilgamesh Epic, and Zarathustra.

The author argues that Paul differed from the Jerusalem Christians by interpreting the crucifixion in terms that presuppose that men are enslaved by demonic powers, from which they are redeemed through the death and resurrection of a divine savior. The Jerusalemites, by way of contrast, interpreted Jesus' death as a martyr's death for Israel, followed by his resurrection as a prelude to a return with supernatural power to restore the kingdom to Israel.

Brandon outlines with admirable clarity the hypothesis that Mark was written in Rome as an attempt to exonerate Christians from the accusation of treason by transferring the responsibility for the crucifixion from the Roman governor to the Jewish leaders. His study of Josephus is an excellent example of evaluating tendentious documents. He demonstrates how the Jewish War is affected by the writer's intent to console those whom the Romans have vanquished and to deter others who are tempted to revolt. On the other hand, the account of Jesus of Nazareth in chapter 18 of the *Antiquities*, which would suggest that Josephus admitted the

truth of the Christian case, is probably to be judged a Christian interpolation or at least a modification of what Josephus said about Jesus.

Many of these essays will be very valuable for orientating seminary students and pastors to a significant position on difficult exegetical questions. Critical reading and judicious use of the excellent bibliographies will soon get the student beyond the apprentice stage.

RALPH W. KLEIN

**THE ARMENIANS.** By Sirarpie Der Nersessian. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970. 216 pages (including 78 photographs, 48 line drawings, and 2 maps). Cloth. \$8.50.

The Armenians, a very ancient people, have the honor of being the first people to convert as a nation to Christianity. That faith was maintained in history only by a devotion that was willing to endure persecution, be it from Arabs in the early period of Islam or from Turks in the first quarter of this century. Yet the Armenians as a people are little known in the west.

This volume may help in filling this knowledge gap. It is written by an outstanding expert in Byzantine art and history, herself an Armenian by birth. One can only express appreciation for the volume.

The first three chapters sketch the geography of ancient Armenia and a history of its people through the 14th century, including the Kingdom of Cilicia. This survey is so packed with names and facts that it reads very slowly—but fruitfully. It is a marvel of compression. The next three chapters discuss the social structure of the Armenians, their religion (with emphasis on the Christian era), and the literature they produced. Like most Armenian writers, the author rejects the charge of monophysitism by sug-

gesting that Chalcedon's creed was rejected by the Armenians out of fear of a tendency in that creed toward Nestorianism (p. 77). The Armenian Church, she states, has always rejected the confusion or mingling of the two natures in Christ. The literature, both translated and original, demonstrates that the Armenians always had a lively interest in and acquaintance with the west.

The final three chapters deal with Armenian architecture, sculpture, and painting. The illustrations in this volume are very well selected to make the verbal descriptions clear.

One wishes that the author had spoken a bit more about the present condition of the Armenian people and had described some of the contacts between Armenians and the west in 18th-century Holland and Naples. But an author should be thanked for what she has done, not faulted for what is omitted. What Der Nersessian has done is give us an introduction to an important area of human life and thought; that she has done it gracefully and authoritatively is no small benefit.

A selected bibliography will aid the interested reader in pursuing the subjects treated further.

EDGAR KRENTZ

*RESPONSIBILITY IN MODERN RELIGIOUS ETHICS.* By Albert R. Jonsen. Washington, D. C.: Corpus Books, 1968. 249 pp. Cloth. \$6.95.

According to James M. Gustafson's sympathetic and delicate foreword, Jonsen was the first Roman Catholic doctoral candidate at Yale University Divinity School in the field of Christian ethics. Jonsen's dissertation is a study of Barth, Häring, Bonhöffer, H. R. Niebuhr, and Robert Johann on "responsibility." He "seeks to be faithful to the essentials of traditional Roman Catholic dogma while exploring the possibilities of new insights regarding the responsible relation of man to God and to man." Jonsen also calls attention to the fact that the theologians who are the object of his study have not solved the ambiguities and problems which adhere to the topic, and when he argues that human action is related both to human powers and a transcendent ground

represented by St. Paul's doctrine of creation, he is indeed offering a commendable advance over much that has been written on the subject. But the reader will miss a clear exposition of the relation between God's monergism in creation, redemption, sanctification, and man's responsibility. Perhaps Gustafson ought to have encouraged Jonsen to ask the necessary questions regarding this point.

RICHARD KLANN

*BALANCING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.* By Charles Caldwell Ryrie. Chicago: Moody Press, 1969. 191 pages. Cloth. \$3.95.

Dallas Theological Seminary's Ryrie offers a great deal of sound Christian insight in this book, obviously written for the general reader. A grateful acknowledgement of this achievement, however, would seem to entail responsible comment on other features of this work. Ryrie has a tendency to move within several levels of discourse without signaling the turns he means to take. Nor are his categories happily chosen in every case; sanctification, legalism, and liberty ought surely to be seen in a proper relationship to what Lutherans call the distinction of Law and Gospel. Nor is "balancing the Christian life" as easy or simple a topic as Ryrie writes about it. Regretfully, the book is a demonstration that Luther's *simul* as well as his proper distinction of Law and Gospel cannot be ignored even in the irenic ambience so agreeably exuded by this book.

RICHARD KLANN

*CHRISTIAN ETHICS.* By David H. C. Read. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969. 122 pages. Paper. \$2.45.

This is one of the titles of the "Knowing Christianity" series edited by William Neil of Nottingham University, England. Read is pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City and has become well known nationally by his eloquent sermons delivered over the National Radio Pulpit. It is meant to be a popular book, but it maintains the "popular" style acceptable at a modern university, for example, the Divinity School of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where the lectures were originally

delivered. Read seeks to show how it is possible to maintain traditional Christian ethics within the experiences of the last few decades. He believes that it is not enough merely to sound off with the ethical slogans of the past, but that the present generation must be shown how the Christian Gospel speaks to the problems of the present.

RICHARD KLANN

*THE GENEVA BIBLE: A FACSIMILE OF THE 1560 EDITION.* Edited by Lloyd E. Berry. Madison, Wis.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. Not paginated. Cloth. \$29.50.

Before his martyrdom in 1536 William Tyndale had completed a revised translation of the New Testament and of a number of books of the Old Testament. A year earlier Miles Coverdale, a lesser scholar than Tyndale, published his version of the Latin Vulgate. The king's license was claimed for Coverdale's revision printed in 1537, a piece of prestige shared in the same year by a translation based on Tyndale and part of Coverdale's Old Testament and known as Matthew's Bible (but generally ascribed to the editorial direction of Tyndale's friend John Rogers). In competition with one another both lost the prize. Coverdale's version was not based on the original languages; the Matthew version was too controversial because of its notes and prologs. More a political than a scholarly solution was the wedding of the two traditions through Coverdale's direction of a revision of the Matthew Bible, with more dependence on Hebrew and Greek, published in 1539 and known, because of its size, as the "Great Bible" (with cover 16½"×11"), but diminished as to contents through deletion of some prologs and notes. This Bible became the standard text for the English Church until the Bishops' Bible of 1568 was published. In the meantime, however, a fresh bit of crossbreeding was undertaken by English reformers who felt the wrath of Mary Tudor's regime. After the usual bickering and chief-seating that characterizes the history of many dissident groups, the reformers chose Geneva as their launching platform for the truth as

they saw it. The evidence of history leans in the direction of William Whittingham as largely responsible for the mix known as the "Geneva Bible," published between April 10 and May 30 of 1560. In addition to fresh investigation based on the original languages, this version appears to use the Great Bible as the foundation for its text and draws on the resources of a number of other translations in various languages, including especially Tyndale's work.

In keeping with the antiestablishment spirit of its sponsors, this version incorporated a number of innovations, including the adoption of Robert Stephanus' verse divisions of the New Testament (made in 1551), italic type for words interpolated into the text, accentuation of proper names, and explanatory commentary "upon all the hard places." Such magnanimous consideration for the reader was not to be evaluated with equal sympathy. A subsequent antidote, the Bishops' Bible, failed however to tip the scales against the popularity of the Geneva Bible. That accomplishment was left for the King James Version of 1611.

In this facsimile edition of the Geneva Bible the reader is taken on a trip into the fascinating world of early English printing as well as the thoughts that agitated those who pondered the message of Scripture for their time. Not only is this book an adornment to any shelf, but its value in sharing a significant chapter in the history of Biblical translation is appreciable for the Bible class teacher who finds it in his church's library. The preface to the modern reader is virtually a resumé of early English translations and is followed by a helpful bibliography.

FREDERICK W. DANKER

*THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS DECISIONS: AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS.* By Harmon L. Smith and Louis W. Hodges. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1969. 320 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.

This book is an attempt to introduce the reader to a particular way of doing ethics which the authors have called "principled contextualism." To achieve their purpose, they have chosen to deal with the theological

foundation and principles of Christian decision-making by offering excerpts from the writings of Paul Tillich, the Niebuhr brothers, John Baillie, Bernhard Anderson, P. T. Forsyth, Robert McAfee Brown, Emil Brunner, Amos Wilder, Karl Barth, Alexander Miller, Paul Ramsey, and John A. T. Robinson. Their last part, "The Practice of Christian Decision-Making," advances their own recommendations on what they think are the five major topics of the moment. This reviewer remains unpersuaded that this is a good way to introduce the student to Christian ethics.

RICHARD KLANN

*THEORIES OF PRIMITIVE RELIGION.*

By E. E. Evans-Pritchard. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. 132 pages. Paper. \$2.00.

This is a new edition of the Sir D. Owen Evans Lectures that Evans-Pritchard delivered at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth.

The author discusses various theories advanced by anthropologists (in a broad sense) to account for religions of primitive peoples and, by implication, for religion in general. He divides the theories into psychological (for example, those of Max Müller, Herbert Spencer, Edward Tylor, James Frazer, F. B. Jevons, R. R. Marett, John H. King, K. T. Preuss, A. E. Crawley, and Wilhelm Wundt) and sociological (for example, those of E. Durkheim, Robertson Smith, W. Trotter and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown). A separate chapter is devoted to Lucien Levy-Bruhl, with whom the author is in general agreement.

Evans-Pritchard criticizes these philosophers of religion for false assumptions, projections of their own ideas on primitive cultures, and failure to understand the religions they are discussing. Few of the writers discussed had actual field experience. Their theories, which can be neither proved nor disproved, are useless to anthropologists working with primitive people. He is particularly critical of theories that assume intellectual inferiority and superstitious tendencies in primitives to support evolutionary tendencies. This negative criticism is necessary for the removal of philosophical debris.

A positive approach is now needed and may be indicated by phenomenological studies.

The book has many interesting observations, for example: "The non-believer seeks for some theory — biological, psychological, or sociological — which will explain the illusion [of religion]; the believer seeks rather to understand the manner in which a people conceives of a reality and their relation to it." (P. 121)

ERWIN L. LUEKER

*ON BEING RESPONSIBLE: ISSUES IN PERSONAL ETHICS.* Edited by James M. Gustavson and James T. Laney. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. 310 pages. Paper. \$3.50.

Martin E. Marty is a general editor of the Harper Forum Books. These are intended to serve the convenience of students and the general reader in the areas of contact between religion and cultural interests. This paperback contains selections from the writings of "contemporary" theologians and philosophers on the topic of "responsibility," ranging from Immanuel Kant to Bonhöffer, Pope John XXIII, Max Weber, Karl Barth, Roger Mehl, Bernard Häring, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Lehmann, John A. T. Robinson, Martin Luther King, and Marc Oraison. The Christian reader will have a convenient inspection tour of the popular stands in the vanity fair of modern ethical instruction. On the other hand, no one should underestimate the apologetic value of this collection of essays in our secular society.

RICHARD KLANN

*EASTER: A PICTORIAL PILGRIMAGE.*

By Pierre Benoit and others. New York: Abingdon Press, 1969. 156 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.

The team that prepared this magnificent volume intended not to offer a report of one more pilgrimage but to "take the reader on his own pilgrimage" of the holy places of Jerusalem. Two brief essays ("The History of the Easter Feast" and "The Holy Places of the Passion") prepare the way for the collection of pictures that constitute the bulk of the book. The pictures cover the period from Palm Sunday through Easter. While

some are of familiar subjects, the majority of the photographs are of works never before reproduced. That in itself is a major achievement, since one would think that Jerusalem had by now been thoroughly exposed to film. The editors tell of obtaining special permissions—and of priests and curates peeping over their shoulders—so that they were able to remove certain icons from their glass frames, clean and polish them with oil, and photograph them. We should be thankful for their diligence, since the results are stunning indeed. The photos—mostly black and white but many in full color—are sharp and clear, and they are well chosen from the viewpoints both of archaeology and art. This volume confronts the reader with the devout expressions of Christian artists of many different centuries and denominations. ROBERT SMITH

*CONTROVERSY IN THE TWENTIES: FUNDAMENTALISM, MODERNISM AND EVOLUTION.* Edited by Willard B. Gatewood Jr. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969. 459 pages. Cloth. \$10.00.

One would almost believe that this is a 50th-anniversary volume, but this reviewer sought such an announcement in vain. Yet it is a modern volume as it pricks the church and its historians with the past in modern dress. The church and its rapport with society has not really changed very much in a half century. This is evident both in the "Contenders for the Faith" and in "Embattled Academe" that this text describes.

Composed of both comment and primary sources, the material the editor has brought together constitutes a happy marriage of "particular interest to students of American church history and American thought." It is perhaps a shame that the cost of the work will seriously limit its use for the church today, "but of the rising costs of books there is no end." There are many serious things said in this book to the church of today. The editor deserves a high accolade for the introduction, which offers a concise 46-page analysis of the third decade of the 20th century. The production in one place of the

texts of many of the primary works of the twenties is admirable and valuable.

The decade is set into its context with a steady eye and a ready hand. None of the material is produced in a vacuum, and the avenues of society are carefully probed from various perspectives. The quotations that a review could cite would leave one overwhelmed both by their modern tone and their depth of perception relative to today's problems. This is a work no church historian should miss.

JOHN W. CONSTABLE

*RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.* By S. Ver-non McCasland, Grace E. Cairns, and David C. Yu. New York: Random House, 1969. xviii and 760 pages. Cloth. \$8.50.

This book is the result of collaboration by three scholars: a Biblical scholar, a specialist on Indian religions, and a Sinologist. The book is divided into five parts and 25 chapters. Part One is devoted to introduction and deals with definitions of religion, methodological problems, and understanding of primitive religions.

A good deal of space is devoted to the religions of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The authors assert, rightly, that such information of past history of religions is necessary to pave the way for understanding contemporary religions. Unfortunately the historical material, which could have been kept brief, was expounded at length. Young students today are keenly interested in the contemporary religious situation in the world, rather than in the religious life of the past, no matter how important it may have been. The "new religions" like Nichiren Shōshū (Sōka Gakkai) are not considered in this book.

Even when dealing with Christianity, the authors deal amply with the development of the basic doctrines of Christianity and with the growth of the denominations. But here also some significant developments of contemporary Christianity are ignored. The last significant theology dealt with in this book is the Scholastic work of Thomas Aquinas. One cannot find names like Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Teilhard de Chardin.

The authors contend that any religion has a close relationship to geography, history, and other cultural factors. So each religion is introduced with an explanation of such matters. These background materials are useful as review and stress the importance of such knowledge, which is all to the good. But in favor of this the authors neglect to provide adequate information about actual religious practices. For example, on page 134 the authors explain that Zoroaster was said to repudiate sacrifices of blood and *boma*, a kind of intoxicating liquid, but that he retained the old cult of fire. The authors, however, do not explain what this cult of fire was in the old religions of Persia and what an important place the fire cult occupied in Zoroaster's newly founded religion.

The book also contains some irrelevant generalizations. For example, on page 612 it is claimed: "Christian missionaries in China have used the term Shang Ti for the God of their own faith, and hence Christians in modern China associate the name Shang Ti with a monotheistic god." Ever since Christians began mission work in China there has been no complete agreement on the proper term for the God of the Christian faith. Shang Ti was not a single accepted term for the Christian God. Even today Christians use various terms, like Tienchu or Shen, to designate God.

In spite of these weaknesses, *Religions of the World* is an excellent survey text and should prove useful. It contains more than 100 illustrations and a select bibliography at the end of each unit, along with a useful general bibliography at the end of the book.

WI JO KANG

*THE CHURCH OF THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION.* By Karl H. Dannenfeldt. St. Louis: Concordia, 1970. 145 pages. Cloth. \$4.95.

This work is a continuation of the series on church history begun in 1964 with *The Church of the Catacombs* by the late Walter Oetting. It is designed for popular lay use and thus the technical footnoting is thankfully at a minimum.

The most important problem with this

book is frankly its cost. It will price the book right out of the field for which it is intended. Oetting's was in paperback and sold for \$3.00 less than this cloth-bound volume. If this volume could have been put out in paper and could have contained at least a few maps or pictures, an additional cost might have been justified. Cold text, particularly in history, is deadening.

This reviewer would probably have preferred that the time-span might have been extended to 1619 and the Synod of Dort or to 1648 and Westphalia. These times would have rounded out the presentation to a historian's eye. There are suggestions in the "Epilog" that the author himself felt this also.

The work is to be commended for its readability and for the immense scope within such a short book. The author's well-selected source materials introduce one to selected materials that help fill in the text and continue the tradition of this series. Of special use for the seeker is the "Suggestions for Further Study" that should find some interested in pursuing an appealing avenue only partially opened.

JOHN CONSTABLE

*CHURCH BUSINESS METHODS.* By Edgar Walz. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970. 85 pages. Paper. \$2.50.

Walz has set forth in this book an abbreviated review of administrative procedures, basic management principles, and those qualities of leadership that are essential for the parish. Of particular note are his excellent suggestions for record keeping, financial administration, and techniques for developing good church organization. A section dealing with the organization and relationship of cooperative activities and neighborhood church councils, which are essential in our present society, would have complemented the final chapter on public relations. This book is recommended as an excellent resource book for all congregational planning committees. It will prove of special value to the young congregation as it sets about the task of establishing an internal organization and writing a constitution.

VICTOR O. MENNICKE