

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.

THE HISTORY OF NATURE. By C. F. von Weizsäcker. Translated from the German by Fred D. Wieck. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. C. 1949. 192 pages, 6×8. \$3.00.

We are reviewing this widely heralded book partly for the reason that it is one of the most recent and most comprehensive scientific interpretations of the universe spelled out in language which the non-scientist can understand, and partly because the author endeavors, however tenuously, to relate his outlook to the Christian ethic.

After a sparkling introduction to his theme the author presents his views — they are chiefly opinions, and he is careful to differentiate between these personal opinions and what are regarded well-grounded scientific conclusions — under the following chapter headings: return to the history of the earth; the spatial structure of the universe; the time structure of the universe; star systems; stars; the earth; life; the soul; man: outer history; man: inner history. In the development of these topics, the author reveals a truly amazing acquaintance with various areas of scientific investigation. Mathematics, astronomy, astrophysics, geology, paleontology, zoology, botany, anthropology — these and other sciences come under the purview of his brilliant mind and are laid under obligation.

Operating with theories current in modern nuclear physics, astrophysics, and geology, with the Darwinian theory of natural selection and the Kant-Laplace nebular theory of the evolution of our planetary system, and consistently applying the Second Law of thermodynamics, the author makes commitments which need not surprise the reader. We list the following:

"The earth has existed two billion years ago" (p. 13); "Geologically speaking, we are living in the midst of the Ice Age. At some time during these hundred thousand years appears the species of man that we consider still closely related to us in physical characteristics. We call him *homo sapiens*" (pp. 26—27); "Four hundred million years ago, life began to crawl from the sea onto dry land. About six hundred million years circumscribe the era in which we find traces of life. . . . Present research makes it seem likely that the earth is roughly three billion years old" (p. 28); "One of the most important steps in the development of natural science was taken when science left behind the myths of the creation of the world and conceived the idea of a world of eternal duration" (p. 46); "I shall assume that all stars and star systems have been formed out of

diffuse masses of gas" (p. 81); "How did life come to be? Up until today we have no answer. But I fail to see how we can avoid assuming an original generation, that is, the growth of molecules or groups of molecules of the kind we call alive, out of those that we do not yet call alive" (p. 114); "The development of the apes begins with half-apes or prosimians, closely related to the insect eaters. The development continues up to the division between the apes of the Old World and those of the New, and in the Old World up to the anthropoids notable for their intelligence. From the anthropoids, the line points toward man" (p. 121). "How shall the physicist understand life? The theory of evolution is the decisive step in the direction of such understanding. . . . Living things can come to be if the necessary conditions are present. The conditions are: the crust of the earth and two billion years' time" (p. 132); "To produce the human race seems to have taken tens of thousands of years" (p. 159).

Since the above views are representative of much of modern science, it follows that the rift between science and Biblical revelation which began in the era of the Renaissance still exists. To heal the rift, a number of solutions are prominent in our day. Either believers in Biblical revelations maintain a gravelike silence regarding this rift, or religious leaders, following the example set by eighteenth-century rationalists, resort to a demythologizing process which ultimately reduces divine revelation to the simple creed, "God loved the world and the world is to love God and, of course, his fellowmen, too," or—and these are in the minority—some theologians who are sincerely concerned about the truth of revelation but who also wish to remain sympathetic toward the results of genuine science honestly attempt to resolve the conflict. The last course is obviously the one which the devoted Christian theologian must follow even though his efforts may not solve all problems.

There is, however, another misgiving which a non-scientist, be he Christian or not, who reads a book like Weizsäcker's cannot escape. We propose to call attention to this misgiving. Considering that modern science computes time not in thousands or tens of thousands or millions, but in billions of years and that it measures the distances in the galaxies in terms of thousands of light years; considering also that the hugest telescopes, though reflecting distant nebulae, are able to bring them into focus only as tiny scattered dots or clusters or clouds; considering also that the distance from the earth to the sun is ninety-three million miles and that "the center of the Milky Way is approximately fifteen thousand light-years away from us" (p. 36), it appears presumptuous to make any claim in the name of science regarding the origin (unless it be recognized that the heavenly bodies were created), history, and future of these many stars out there in space. Even G. E. M. Jauncey in his *Modern Physics* (third edition, New York, 1948, p. 523) concludes his chapter on

astrophysics with the words: "In closing this section it should be pointed out that the above speculations may prove to be quite 'wild.'"

As indicated above, Mr. Weizsäcker is cautious in projecting his views. Most frequently he expresses mere opinion. Yet it frequently happens, as already Plato noted, that the views of great men like Mr. Weizsäcker, if sufficiently propagandized by available modes of communication, are regarded by masses of people as the findings of empirical science. The fact is that every intellectually honest scientist agrees with Jaspers: "The progress of knowledge increases our non-knowledge of the fundamental questions and thus suggests the existence of limits and the need to draw upon sources other than recognition." There are limits in science. When science has been reduced so completely to mathematical computation that it finds no ground whatsoever in observable phenomena, it is no longer science in the respectable sense of the term, but has become philosophy. Yet it is largely this kind of science which characterizes Mr. Weizsäcker's book. One may be willing to grant the legitimacy of drawing an inference from the known to the unknown as the latter confronts man in the nature of the stellar universe. Yet to go beyond this one process and to continue to spin out inference after inference from a permissible inference leads to the construction of a world view which is in no sense more true than Dante's poetic construct of the medieval world and of world views which we meet in comic strips and in some of Walt Disney's weird and fanciful productions. But all this is not science.

Mr. Weizsäcker recognizes that this world view dare not leave out of consideration the religious element. He laments the fact that the scientific and technical world of modern man has not led man into the new bond of love, but rather brought about nihilism and despair. "Without love we are missing the essential. Love itself comes from the objective potentiality, from God, and if it comes to us, we experience it as an act of grace. Love can be given to us—that is the whole substance of the Christian doctrine of salvation. It is rarely given to us before, in despair of ourselves, we have asked for it" (p.188). In place of this love, he believes, nihilism is on the march. Yet, if we have fully understood the author, nihilism can be overcome by greater Christian love. We wish Mr. Weizsäcker had clearly said this and had also stated the source and motivation of this love.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

GLAUBE UND FORSCHUNG. Vortraege und Abhandlungen der Evangelischen Akademie Christophorus-Stift Hemer. Herausgegeben von Guenter Howe, Karl Luecking, Hans Erich Stier. Zweite Folge. 1950. C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Guetersloh. 188 Seiten, 6×9. DM 4.50.

There are several so-called "Evangelische Akademien" in Germany in which representatives of the various professions and trades meet jointly to study the religious and moral problems which confront them in their respective occupations. The Evangelical Academy at the Christophorus-

Stift in Hemer, Westphalia, differs from these inasmuch as it is the only research academy. Its leaders are Dr. Friedrich K. Schumann (one of the essayists at the Bad Boll Free Conferences in 1948 and 1949), the historian Dr. William Schneider, and the scientist Dr. *rerum naturarum* Guenter Howe. The findings of this research society are published in *Glaube und Forschung*. The first volume in this series described the scope and purposes of this "academy." The second volume is restricted to "the discussion (*Gespraech*) between theology and physics." Two more volumes in this series are in preparation, one dealing with the basic problems of the "natural right" and the other with the revision of the philosophy of history. The second volume contains contributions from three theologians and three scientists. The meditation by Dr. Schumann on Col. 1:16-23 is a splendid introduction to the study, since he determines the only *locus* where a "meeting" between scientists and theologians can take place. Probst Dr. Hans Asmussen lists eleven areas in the field of natural science where modern man is compelled to use a new approach. He points out that a correct re-orientation of science can be achieved only if the physicist and the theologian jointly undertake this task. Dr. Dedo Alfred Mueller points out that the principles enunciated by Max Planck in 1923 in discussing the relation of natural laws and autonomy are no longer fully applicable and that an entirely new approach to this problem must be sought in the light of God's Word. Very enlightening are the two contributions by the scientists Pascual Jordan and Friedrich Schneider on "Positivism in the Natural Sciences" and "Positivism in the Natural Sciences and Its Significance." Dr. Howe summarizes the "Current Discussion between Theology and Physics" and points out that such a "meeting" raises anew and in an entirely different light the meaning of substance, the problem of causality, the concepts of time and space.

The relevance of the materials presented in the present volume under review is immediately apparent. The cataclysmic events of the last four decades have completely undermined man's faith in the omniscience of science. Haeckel's *Weltraetsel*, which, as someone has said, was intended to be the program for the twentieth century, has actually become the obituary of the Century of Science. And O. Spengler in his *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* predicted that culture based on modern philosophy and religious liberalism would pass into oblivion. The divorce of science from religion must prove disastrous for science, and probably for both science and religion, as Lecomte du Noüy shows in his *Human Destiny*. This was brought home to us very vividly at the inauguration of the internationally famous physicist Dr. Arthur Compton as chancellor of Washington University, where the addresses of the top men in the atom-research project cast a spell of fear over the audience. There is no valid reason why a Bible-centered theology and an objective science should thumb noses at each other; they must "meet" on a common basis and jointly discuss the problems which confront modern man.

The research project at the Christophorus-Stift and the publication of the results obtained in the meeting of the theologians and the physicists were undertaken to find a solution to the tensions between the two. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the natural sciences to venture an opinion as to the extent in which the real tensions have been brought to the surface nor as to how far this project has succeeded in solving them. But the mere fact that such a "meeting of minds" is taking place is significant. Probably the science professors at our pre-ministerial and normal schools and Valparaiso University or the student pastors of the Synodical Conference should consider the possibility of inaugurating a study project along similar lines. We believe the time is ripe for it. The need is there, and the manpower is available. We realize, of course, that such meetings are more natural in Europe than in America, because there, in distinction from here, the members of the theological faculties at the university are in constant contact with the members of the other faculties, and such close contacts naturally accentuate the tensions but also increase the desire to find the solution.

F. E. MAYER

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES. By Alvin W. Johnson and Frank H. Yost. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 6×9, 279 pages. \$4.50.

This book "is a revised and enlarged edition of Alvin W. Johnson's *The Legal Status of Church-State Relationships in the United States.*" The work is ably documented and the legal materials seem to be adequately stated. The first thirteen chapters concern themselves with the chief thesis of the book, the problem of Church and State with reference to the public schools. Additional chapters concern "Anti-Evolution Laws," "Saluting the Flag," "Citizenship and the Bearing of Arms," "Religion and Freedom of Speech," "Religion and Freedom of the Press," "The Religious Character of Sunday Legislation," and "Sunday Laws and the Police Power." The reader would have been interested to have additional materials on the problems surrounding chaplains in legislative assemblies and in the Armed Forces, and taxation of religious institutions. The authors have probably confined themselves to those areas which have been tested in the courts. In effect the book is a brief for separation of Church and State, particularly in the educational system, on the assumption that thus the freedom of the individual is best preserved. The authors do not fully face the current situation, which the McCollum decision brought into full focus, that whereas the principle of separation has in the past "afforded to the people protection in the enjoyment of their religious rights and convictions" (p.260), such protection is in the process of being withdrawn. The chapter on "The Extent of Parental Control" (p.132 ff.) is suggestive and deserves to become the beginning of further studies.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

SIGNS OF HOPE IN A CENTURY OF DESPAIR. By Elton Trueblood. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1950. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, 125 pages. \$1.00.

This booklet comprises lectures delivered to a number of colleges and conferences by the noted Quaker thinker and professor of Earlham College. Dr. Trueblood takes his cue from the unpromising middle of the seventeenth century in England, which flowered into a "century of genius" in literature and sciences. Dr. Trueblood feels that the galaxy of great theologians in our time similarly augurs an optimistic future despite the gloomy present. Other substantial tokens, or "signs of hope," of promise he sees in the Ecumenical Movement, the "vitality of the new theology," which Professor Trueblood asserts to lie in its awareness of sin, its unique story of the Savior, and a Gospel which lays claim upon the whole person; movements in various Christian groups in which lay people take the initiative in religion; and a series of fellowships or cells of Christians held together by a discipline and devoted to the redemption of men. Those who have enjoyed Elton Trueblood's capacity to turn a phrase will relish it here too.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE ATOMIC CRISIS. By Edward Le Roy Long, Jr. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1950. $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, 112 pages. \$2.00.

This intensely earnest book is written by a young student of science who shifted his vocation to the ministry. The author seeks to confront the ethical implications of the atomic bomb in warfare. He regards it as wrong. He canvasses the types of morality which seek to appease the use of the atomic bomb and feels that obedience to Christ is opposed to it. The author writes interestingly on the ethical question in general. He feels that only the redemption of Christ and trust in God can overcome the fear and the use of the atomic bomb; that Christians must respond to the atomic crisis by faith. The author operates with the Lutheran concept of the "released spirit" — released for service. The method by which this release is to be achieved in a degree effective enough to thwart the "atomic crisis" he needs to work out in stronger detail.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

ABELARD'S CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. By J. Ramsay McCallum. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1948. 117 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. \$1.50.

In both Catholic and Protestant thought an *odium theologicum* attaches to the name of Abelard, Christian thinker of the Middle Ages (1079 to 1142). This is understandable since Abelard, apart from other false views, aimed to demonstrate that pagan Greek, Roman, and even Oriental writers who were wholly uninfluenced by Biblical revelation, nevertheless had a faint knowledge of the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Christian ethic. And so the Christian Church has always justifiably approved of the action of St. Bernard, who at the Council of Soissons in 1142 arraigned Abelard for unorthodoxy.

On the other hand, Abelard will always have to be reckoned with by those who believe that a Christian philosophy is not only possible and that it has always existed, but who also maintain that Protestants should become active in articulating *the* Christian philosophy, if for no other reason than to counteract the Thomistic form of Christian philosophy. In view of this consideration alone, Mr. McCallum has rendered both systematic and historical theology a service by making available in English a careful summary of Abelard's *Christian Theology* and by introducing this summary with brilliantly written chapters on the significance, purpose, character, date, and general background of this important treatise.

Those wishing to gain an insight into Abelard's theological and philosophical views, his independence of mind, his opposition to commonly accepted views, his extensive knowledge, and his keen dialectic will find this little volume an excellent introduction. The book also contains some valuable appendixes and a well-selected bibliography. We conclude with the author's final observation: "We come back, therefore, to the distinction between religion and philosophy, and realize that, though a Christian philosophy may be envisaged, religion and philosophy must continue for some considerable time to go their separate ways. Indeed, it might be said that, at the moment, a philosophy of history can throw the greatest light upon all these matters" (p. 114).

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

THE ZIONIST IDEA. By Joseph Heller. Schocken Books, New York. C. 1949. 246 pages, 5¼×8. \$3.00.

This small but highly concentrated volume furnishes what appears to be a sober and reasonably objective account of Zionism. The book was originally published in England and has been brought up to date for the American reader. An ample bibliography for further study is appended. The author ably sets forth the premises of Jewish nationalism and its relation to religion and the national home in Palestine.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

PREACHING FROM THE PROPERS. By Harry F. Baughman. The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1949. 120 pages, 5¼×8¼. \$1.25.

The five chapters of this little volume are the fourth in a series of lectures given under the Knubel-Miller Foundation of the United Lutheran Church in America. They were delivered to groups of ministers in various parts of the country. Their purpose is to encourage expository preaching based on the Propers—Introit, Gradual, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel. After a chapter of 23 pages in which the advantages and need of expository preaching are clearly and convincingly set forth, four chapters illustrating the author's method and suggestions are presented; they are based on the Propers for *Invocavit*, *Reminiscere*, *Palmarum*, and *Quasimodogeniti*. The studies are well prepared and thought provoking. However, attention should be called to the fact that the Propers cannot always

be so well co-ordinated and integrated as were those chosen discreetly by the author. We might likewise mention that expository preaching, perhaps more so than any other type, should ordinarily take the original Greek text of the Epistles and Gospels into serious consideration. In his reference to the Introit for Palmatum the author would have added to the value of his study by pointing to the Messianic character of Psalm 22 rather than by referring to the "devastating experience first wrung from a perplexed poet's mind and spirit" (p. 80). Nevertheless, Mr. Baughman's *Preaching from the Propers* is stimulating as well as instructive; it deserves careful perusal and study by pastoral conferences as well as by those who desire to master the difficult but effective art and skill of liturgically integrated expository preaching.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

REVIVAL IN OUR TIMES. THE STORY OF THE BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGNS, INCLUDING SIX OF HIS SERMONS. Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Ill., 1950. 5½ × 8, 140 pages. \$2.00.

Billy Graham has received fabulous publicity. This book offers descriptions of several of the campaigns by Graham associates, a file of pictures from the Los Angeles revival, and a series of the evangelist's sermons. These corroborate the reports that Graham's preaching is not unusual. It does have a strong Biblical quality, speaks of Jesus Christ as Savior, and urges the listeners to be prepared for death and the Judgment. The effectiveness of the revivals must be ascribed not only to the preaching but to the effective staff work, preparatory work, and program of each campaign. Billy Graham's work is not isolated, but is part of a movement to which such evangelists as Armin Gesswein have contributed for some years.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE CROSS IS CENTRAL. By Olin C. Fjelstad. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1950. 43 pages, paper cover, 5½ × 8¼. 35 cents.

A booklet of seven short Lenten meditations which faithfully and beautifully lives up to its title throughout. Each of the meditations may easily and profitably be extended into a Lenten sermon and the publication, with its attractive cover, may well be put into the hands of lay people. Shut-ins and prospective members of the Church will enjoy the meditations and derive from them strength and courage.—The Rev. O. C. Fjelstad is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Owatonna, Minn.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

HELP AND COMFORT FROM THE BIBLE. Edited by Leonard M. Leonard and the Staff of the *Journal of Living*. Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N. Y., 1949. 223 pages, 5½ × 8. \$2.50.

Two hundred clergymen of practically all large denominations, including Jewish rabbis, have prepared the quotations found in this volume. The Roman Catholic Church as well as confessional groups like the Lutherans of the Synodical Conference are not represented. The quotations

tend toward being very moralistic, and Christ and His Gospel, our greatest sources of help and comfort, are too often ignored. One can observe from this volume what type of religious thinking is done by a large percentage of the American clergy; happily, relatively little sentimentalizing is done. Mr. Leonard is editor in chief of the *Journal of Living*. In preparing this book, he and his staff sent out some 19,000 questionnaires to ministers in all sections of America. Is the fact that the Cross of Christ is not central in this volume due to the circumstance that those who adhere to the fundamentals of the Christian religion and of Biblical theology failed to testify, or is it due rather to the fact that they were ignored? We wonder.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

THE LITTLE BACH BOOK. Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Ind. 162 pages. \$3.00.

An outgrowth of the Church Music Seminar conducted at Valparaiso annually since 1944, these essays, all centering about the work of Johann Sebastian Bach, have been gathered as a contribution to the study of Bach and his work in the bicentennial year commemorating the death of the great musician. Professor Theodore Hoelty-Nickel supplies the introduction, and the various chapters treat Bach the preacher, the teacher, the tone poet and the organist, the composer of domestic music, and a selected list of Bach recordings. The volume contains a wealth of information infrequently met with even in the more complete biographies. A valuable addition especially to the libraries of our organists and choir leaders.

THEODORE GRAEBNER

CALVARY'S WONDROUS CROSS. By F. J. Huegel. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 116 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. \$1.50.

BONE OF HIS BONE. By F. J. Huegel. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 118 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. \$1.50.

The author of these two books stresses the centralization of the Cross of Christ in the teachings of the Church and in the life of the individual Christian. The author writes: "To the believer the Spirit says: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' It is held in trust. It is already the believer's *judicially*, and will become his *actually* upon the exercise of faith." (*Bone of His Bone*, p. 66.) Preachers are often too superficial in presenting Biblical terms so that the hearer will not get the depth of meaning contained therein nor its blessings. In his Foreword to the volume *Bone of His Bone* the author says that the missionary or preacher "must get beyond a mere intellectual knowledge of the historical Christ and so entwine the tendrils of his spiritual nature in the Eternal Christ that he imbibes a divine life."

We cannot go along with the author when he minimizes denominational differences. He says: "We throw up our hands in horror at our brother's

theological positions and doctrinal commitments, while, if we would come in very truth to our center, the Cross, and our own 'self-life' were crucified, we would experience with him a love and oneness in Christ which would wipe out the points of difference. What if he does have a different view of baptism? The ground of our fellowship is Christ. What if he does hold, as you do not, to predestination? The ground of your fellowship is Christ. That which puts you in rival positions has been crucified and you are one in Christ. What if your views in many church matters differ from his? What really matters is the fact that by the Cross you have both been cut out of the sinful life of the world and have both been baptized by the Spirit into one body, 'the body of Christ.'" (P. 55 in *Calvary's Wondrous Cross*.) *After all, to be faithful to Christ demands that we be faithful to His Word.*

J. H. C. FRITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

From the Westminster and the Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia:

MY FAITH LOOKS UP. By Russell L. Dicks. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1949. 96 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. \$1.50.

HERE WE HAVE STARS. By Margaret R. Seebach. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1949. 245 pages, 5 × 7½. \$2.50.

From C. Bertelsmann Verlag:

GESCHICHTE DER NEUERN EVANGELISCHEN THEOLOGIE IM ZUSAMMENHANG MIT DEN ALLGEMEINEN BEWEGUNGEN DES EUROPÄISCHEN DENKENS. 3. Lieferung, S. 161—240; 4. Lieferung, S. 241 bis 320. Von Emanuel Hirsch. Preis jeder Lieferung DM 3.50. Subskriptionspreis DM 3.15.

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

PORTALS OF PRAYER, No. 100 — "THE FAREWELL DISCOURSES AND THE HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER." By H. F. Wind and Geo. Koenig. Daily Devotions from September 19 to November 9. 10 cents each.

ANDACHTSBUECHLEIN, No. 100. "JESUS CHRISTUS, DIE WAHRHEIT." By Edw. Krause, Sr. — Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 19. September bis zum 9. November. 10 cents each.