

# Book Reviews

*Reports to Protestants*, by Marcus Bach, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1948. 277 pages. \$3.00.

"The strength of the Christian faith is in the individual, and faith demands personal work." Thus Marcus Bach brings to a focus the insights of a highly readable and fascinating story. The volume should be required reading for every Protestant. Its message is both timely and relevant as the non-Roman world gropes for a recovery of its heritage and spiritual strength.

New groups of reformers now constitute a real challenge to Protestant lethargy and dissension. A great and persuasive exodus has been made from Protestantism in the direction of Christian Science, the Unity School of Christianity, the Oxford Group, Psychiana, the Baha'i Faith and Jehovah's Witnesses. Why? "The new religions demanded complete dedication of self to a cause, and that is what the people wanted. They were asking for a change in the static routine of religious life; they were looking for a full-time job in the kingdom." (p. 200.)

On the right, Catholicism is on the march with organizations and techniques scaled to the believer's personal life. Her greatest strength is precisely at the point of an emphasis on man's direct encounter with God. Through all of her forms, ceremony and symbolism the individual is assured that the Church is the divine channel of grace *for him*.

The challenge before Protestantism is again to provide personal spiritual directives for 'the people in the pew. The individual Protestant must once again embark on the high adventure of an unlimited personal faith. The miracle of an ecumenical church will avail little toward the conquering of a growing secularism apart from a

primary emphasis upon a personal spiritualized faith. "The individual (has) been lost in Protestantism's exemplary world outlook. The far horizons of the social gospel (have) thrown him out of perspective. The unending cycle of institutionalized religion, conferences, councils, and movements (have) overlooked the spiritual worth of the average churchgoer. He (is) waiting for organizational activity to be scaled to his personal needs." (p. 270)

The educational and spiritual worth of the book is enhanced by a story technique not unlike the sustaining power of a novel. Through it many may discover the vast power and importance of believing something with uncompromising dedication and loyalty.

CHILTON C. MCPHEETERS

*Protestantism Faces Its Educational Task Together*, by William Clayton Bower and Percy Roy Hayward, Appleton, Wisconsin: C. C. Nelson Publishing Co. 1949 286 pages.

This book attempts to give a history and a definition of the International Council of Religious Education. It is a valuable study of the involved process of the development of the Council. In it are named a net-work of organizations and activities in some way related to the International Council.

The book is well organized and beautifully written in a flowing, dignified style. The lack of perspective for appraisal of the work of the Council is revealed in an occasional journalistic tip of the hat to surviving and contemporary figures in the movement.

The chapters are: I. An Adventure in Cooperation; II. Organizational Structure; III. Underlying Philosophy; IV. Curric-

ulum Development; V. The Religious Education of Children; VI. The Religious Education of Youth; VII. Religious Education in Adult and Family Life; VIII. Leadership Education; IX. Vacation and Weekday Religious Education; X. Field Work and Conventions; XI. Research in the Council's Program; XII. Bible Revision; XV. Choosing Main Directions.

The Christian Education movement as a cooperative enterprise is traced from the organization of the First Day or Sunday School Society of Philadelphia in 1791 to the American Sunday School Union in 1824; through a period of conventions to one in which uniform lessons were projected and a lesson committee was chosen in 1872; to the change of the name of the International Sunday School Convention to International Sunday School Association, in 1902 and finally to the organization, in 1922, of what is now known as the International Council of Religious Education.

With respect to the underlying philosophy of the International Council the authors say: "The account of the Rise and Development of the Council as set forth in Chapters I and II clearly indicates that it has throughout been self-conscious, self-criticizing, and under the control of ideas which it has reexamined and formulated from time to time as it faced new conditions in a changing intellectual, theological and social situation." The Council has brought together more than forty denominations "representing the widest possible divergence of theological convictions from the very conservative to the very liberal. . . . The one condition of membership has been that the constituent communions should be within the historical evangelical tradition." Referring to the 1940 statement of the Council's theological position the statement is made that "Two widely different systems of theological thought, each based upon fundamentally different presuppositions, lie side by side in the report, as they do in the constituency of the Council."

With respect to the curriculum it is noted that "by 1930 the broader implica-

tions of a functional concept of the curriculum involving vastly more than courses of study began to appear. Every phase of the experience of growing persons has potential religious significance." The history of the conflict over the use of graded and uniform lessons is briefly outlined.

In introducing the chapter on the religious education of children the scripture is made to read, "Who of you, in separation, is sufficient for these things?" The child is influenced by many social conditions hence the approach to children must be a community wide approach. Noteworthy also is the statement: "Around the year 1940 a need for evangelism came to be felt."

The Youth Movement as related to the International Council began with the days of the Young People's Division of the International Sunday School Association and is now the Christian Youth Movement "which has always been concerned with social issues and action." "Seminars in such areas as race relations, political education, world order, and the problems of labor and management are important activities." Concern is expressed that the evangelism of youth "shall come, not as the result of spasmodic effort but through its being recognized as a primary and continuing task of the church."

The change of the term "Teacher Training" to "Leadership Training" is referred to as significant of the trend away from indoctrination, authoritarianism and transmissive teaching. This trend is referred to as the "new current underway." Leaders and guides are to be distinguished from teachers in their methodology.

It was the hope of the Council that the Weekday School "would realize for the modern world a religious training more nearly adequate to meet present conditions." After its initial stages in Gary and a period of expansion there followed a period of examination and self-criticism. The chapter closes on a note of hope that the Champaign decision, by forcing the church back upon its own resources, may prove to have been a blessing in disguise.

War and post-War activities are discussed, a brief story of the Revised Standard version of the New Testament is given and the book approaches its close in an interpretation of the program of the Council. Christian education must create a favorable climate of public opinion. This cannot be done through the technique of evangelism though evangelism has its indispensable values. "Public opinion is created by information, by the dramatic presentation of facts and ideas, by sponsorship by persons of social prestige, and by repeated emphasis through the press, radio and other public media."

The Council is defined as a "process" in which continuity and change have been indissolubly united. The basic pragmatism and naturalism which pervades the book is a faithful reflection of Dr. Bower's functionalism in education. Such terms as "process," "sharing of experience," abound in the book.

One is almost amazed at its *naïvete* in some areas. An example of this is the statement "Around the year 1940 a need for emphasis on evangelism came to be felt." What a long and dreary period of incubation from 1922 to 1940 that "feeling" passed through. Apparently it remained for Barth and Brunner, the worst war in history, the breaking of the heart of the world juvenile delinquency and insanity on an unparalleled scale to awaken the Council to the beginning of a feeling that there is a need for evangelism.

Those acquainted with the unequivocal humanism and pragmatism of Dr. Bower will not wonder at the mildness of this approach to evangelism. After all, how could he stress evangelism in evangelical terms without a certain dragging of the feet?

HAROLD C. MASON

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*The Reinterpretation of Luther*, by Edgar M. Carlson, Westminster Press Philadelphia, 1948. 256 pages. \$3.50.

There is a decline of Liberalism and a shift to a more evangelical interpretation of Christianity throughout the world. It is only natural that scholars should return

to a consideration of the Reformers for they seek a satisfactory analysis of the content of the Christian faith and message. Next to the primitive era and the literature of the New Testament, no period has so much to offer to the theological analyst as the Reformation.

The author is bringing to the attention of the English-speaking world the results of four decades of intensive research into the theology of Luther by Swedish scholars. The work of such men as Billing, Söderblom, Aulén, and Nygren is reviewed, and a splendid analysis of the Lundensian theology is given with its emphasis upon the *Agape* type as opposed to the *Eros* type of Christian interpretation.

The final chapter suggests a possible contribution that the Swedish interpretation of Luther may be able to make to us in this time of theological revision and revival. He shows that American Protestantism is less directly descended from the original Reformation movement than is Protestantism in Europe, and contends that we have resorted to a rather piece-meal appropriation or rejection of Luther's views. It will be helpful to understand just what Luther did teach.

"In going behind the historical Confessions to the evangelical core in Luther's theology, Swedish Lutheran research has addressed itself to all the descendents of the Reformation." The author offers some very definite contributions. Among these contributions the following pertinent ones may be offered by way of illustration.

1. The Swedish reinterpretation of Luther may assist in overcoming the theological legalism inherent in Lutheran theology, as well as in other branches of Protestant theology.

2. It will assist in withstanding the powerful but erratic subjectivism of the enthusiasts, as well as others who may over-stress subjectivism and experience-centered religion.

3. It will give added impetus to the critics who are re-thinking the questions posed by liberal thought. American theology is profoundly challenged by the fundamental character of the Swedish criticism, which is unalterably opposed to the human-

istic, anthropocentric character of our Liberalism.

4. It maintains a fine balance between religion and ethics, faith and works, and justification and sanctification. It delineates the nature and province of each. "The fundamental distinction is not between the individual and the social, or between man and his environment, but between a theocentric and an anthropocentric view of both." The Swedish theology is emphatically theocentric.

This is a significant study which will be welcomed by those who are looking for something deeper than mere surface thinking. Its close study will be rewarding.

WILDER R. REYNOLDS

*The Protestant Dilemma*, by Carl F. H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948. 248 pages. \$3.00.

It is refreshing, in a day when the diagnosticians of the illness of our civilization so consistently trace the present crisis to "the lag of our spiritual growth behind our technological development" or to some other well-worn explanations, to find an author who has the forthrightness to trace the disease to the abandonment of *some specific form* of the spiritual life, and the substitution of religious makeshifts. Professor Henry staked out his ground in his *Remaking of the Modern Mind*; in this present volume he cultivates more intensively a portion of that field. In both works, he emphasizes his belief that the period, 1914-1945 is one of sudden crisis, marking a transition "unprecedented in human history for suddenness, and surpassed on few occasions for significance." (p. 17)

The author's thesis is, that the crisis of our time is focalized in the theological dilemma in which the modern man finds himself as a consequence of the manifest failure of theological liberalism. Unwilling to consider the option of Biblical Theism, and yet dissatisfied with the Neo-Supernaturalist attempt at a synthesis of historic Christianity with the major premises of modern thought, the twentieth-century man seeks a new set of premises. Underlying such a re-statement of basic principles must

be, thinks our author, a re-thinking of the entire question of authority.

The heart of the volume is to be found in the three lengthy chapters, sketching the Mid-Twentieth Century View of Revelation of Sin, and of Christ. Of these, the first is the longest and the most crucial for the development of the author's thesis. He cites the contemporary embarrassment of the evolutionary Naturalistic movement, observing that it was not a Fundamentalist, but a Swiss Old Testament scholar, Walther Eichrodt, who pronounced the eulogy over the classical liberalism of Harry Emerson Fosdick. He recognizes, further, that the most formidable attack upon the liberal view of revelation has come from the Dialectical Theology. Henry is correct in his treatment of Emil Brunner as the classic exponent of this theology's view of the Bible; he has assembled a mass of quotations from Brunner's writings, particularly *Revelation and Reason*.

In this analysis, Henry frankly recognizes the foibles of many of the champions of high views of Inspiration, finding their dogmatism to be matched only by the dogmatism of the scientists. At the same time, he exposes Brunner's treatment as being chiefly an attack levelled at Fundamentalism. One wonders how long the great Swiss can maintain his reputation simply upon the basis of his tirades against the "bibliolators" and the alleged Fundamentalist "bondage to the Biblical text." Henry's conclusion at this point is, that the dialectical view of the Scriptures is fundamentally unstable, and that its chief weakness is the manner in which it raises a crucial question which by its own inner logic it cannot answer, namely, that of the propositional significance of the Scriptures.

The arguments in the chapters treating of the Neo-Supernaturalist views of Christ and of Sin follow much the same pattern: the liberal-critical views upon these subjects led to such confusion that some reaction was inevitable. At the same time, the "Mid-Twentieth Century" views have grown out of philosophical soil which inescapably retains much of the pattern of denials characteristic of the older liberal view(s). In the dialecticians' view of both

sin and Christ, there is a series of tensions, representing an attempt to mix disparate substances, and resulting in an unstable emulsion.

The final chapter, under title of "The Protestant Horizon" is a summons to the positions of historic Christianity, based upon the necessity of rebuilding our shattered civilization upon the groundwork of other principles than those which have led to the collapse of modern values and ideals. This the Neo-Supernaturalists have not had the forthrightness to do.

The general tone of the volume is indicative of a growing ability upon the part of this creative young writer to assess movements of thought appreciately, and to differ with them in a constructive manner. Dealing, as he does in this volume, chiefly with the problems posed by the neo-supernaturalists, he seems to this reviewer to find a wholesome middle path between the unthinking acceptance of their positions on the one hand, and a wholesale denunciation of them on the other. At the same time, the writer has discerned the basic issues between the "Mid-Twentieth Century" view and that of historic Christianity, and especially, the problem posed by the insistence of the dialecticians that *they* represent the simon-pure Reformation position.

The final chapter, under title of "The Protestant Horizon", is essentially an 'if' chapter; that is, it turns upon the question of whether or not the Protestantism of the future will accept a form of authority which will sustain an adequate view of Christ. Henry is convinced that the view of Christ which parades as *higher* because of its supposed severance from the Gospel narratives has a deceptive show of vigor, which will disappear as it moves into circles unable to maintain the higher gnosis which its adherents profess.

*The Protestant Dilemma* deserves a reading by those whom it makes its opponents no less than those interested in the historic Christian position. While it deals primarily with the dialectical theology, it is not a tirade against it. It seems to this reviewer that the dialecticians might "see themselves

as others see them" far more clearly here than, for instance, in *The New Modernism*. And for the beginner in apologetics, Henry's volume might well serve as an introduction. The book is made readable by the author's inclusion of quoted material as well as more technical observations in footnotes.

HAROLD B. KUHN

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*We the Holiness People*, by Harry E. Jessop. Chicago: The Evangelistic Institute, 1948. 95 pages. \$1.00.

Few religious movements in our time have been more misunderstood by foes and misinterpreted by friends than the contemporary branch of Wesleyanism known as the Holiness Movement. One needs only to read the newspaper to hear snake-handlers, poison-drinkers, and fanatics of every sort denominated as "Holiness people." In the light of this, it is enlightening to all who will take the trouble to read to have in brief and compact form a statement of the principles underlying the Holiness Movement as represented by The National Association For the Promotion of Holiness.

Dr. Jessop writes from within the movement, and is recognized as a leader in its ministry, both as a clergyman and as an educator. He is, therefore, in a position to answer the questions posed by the two major divisions of the volume, namely "Who are the Holiness People?" and "What Do the Holiness People Believe and Teach?" An examination of the former division yields the information that the Holiness People are the present-day version of original Wesleyanism, and are to be found in both the parent church (Methodist) and in a number of derivative bodies. Their distinguishing mark is that they maintain the emphasis of John Wesley upon "the witness of the Spirit" and "entire sanctification" with a remarkable fidelity to his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

Concerning the question posed by Part Two, the author not only states his personal position (which he does with conciseness and freshness) but also documents the several points of belief by quotations from men of sanctity of other days whose leadership in the great denominations was un-

questioned. The overall impression given is, that the Holiness People are the legitimate heirs of a spiritual movement whose power and influence are matters of record, and that they bring actively into contemporary life the characteristic emphasis of the Wesleyan awakening of the eighteenth century.

It seems to the reviewer that Jessop's work has a two-fold value; it is, first of all, an interpretation of the movement he describes. As such, it places a conservative statement of the Wesleyan perfectionist in easily accessible form, rendering it available to all who desire to clear away their misconceptions concerning the basic sanity of this theological position. As an interpretation, it reflects the clear thinking of the author, whose abilities as an expositor have been recognized, not only by those of his persuasion, but by those of other traditions.

The volume is likewise to be commended as a manual for those within the theological tradition which it describes. The general tone is one of affirmative exposition, without disparagement of contrary views. The author breathes through his work the Perfect Love which is, after all, the goal of true Christian experience, and which the Movement he describes asserts to be available through grace for the believer in present time.

HAROLD B. KUHN

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*The Best of John Henry Jowett*, edited by Gerald Kennedy. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948. 167 pp. \$2.00.

The appearance of this volume, the first in a series of compilations of the enduring sermons of past masters of the pulpit, testifies to the awakened interest in preaching that is being felt these days, a revival long overdue. The Jowett series is to be followed by individual collections of the "best" of G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, Alexander McLaren, John A. Hutton, and George Mathieson, all edited by men especially fitted for the task. The present volume seeks to furnish representative selections from Jowett's sermons, meditations, short addresses, prayers, and lectures. Many of these writings have been out of print. It will be unusual if some admirer of the preacher

is not disconcerted either at the inclusion or exclusion of some piece. An editor's choices must necessarily reflect somewhat his own prejudices. Kennedy's objective approach to his study commends itself to us, for instead of reading biographies and gathering anecdotes about his subject he first studied all that Dr. Jowett himself had ever written.

That Jowett's sermons should be selected for re-publication is not at all surprising. In his own day he was recognized as a great preacher. His preaching emphasis, moreover, is especially needed in our time; for Jowett is at his best when he is telling of God's love for man the individual. His is essentially a gospel of comfort and good news. "Preach to broken hearts" was the advice he gave in his Yale lectures. So great is his stress on man's personal needs that his messages are almost entirely lacking in social emphasis. To quote again from his "Lectures," "Men may become so absorbed in social wrongs as to miss the deeper malady of personal sin." The Biblical texture of the sermons should give us pause. Finally, the superb craftsmanship of the master-preacher has contributed much to their enduring quality. Divisional clarity, concrete diction, smooth sentences, vivid imagery—these are some of the stylistic traits notoriously absent in all too many of today's "great" sermons. Jowett is a model not only for him who seeks to interpret God's grace to men but for him who would become a master of lucid pulpit style.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

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*The Christ of the Poets*, by Edwin Mims. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. 251 pages. \$2.50.

In our perplexed time when men are so freely giving themselves to things of lesser value, this little volume from Edwin Mims, professor emeritus of English at Vanderbilt University, comes to remind us that the majority of the poets of both England and America were men of faith in Christ. We welcome gladly the privilege of renewing acquaintance with the great poets.



whose religious insights qualify them in some measure as guides in our bewildered age.

In his introductory chapter, "Doubt and Faith," Mims rightly calls attention to the unfavorable light in which our modern writers and critics hold Christian verse. The absence of many good Christian poems in the *Oxford Book of Verse* and in other widely used anthologies, he sadly deplures. In spite of the influence that the Christ-intoxicated Donne and Blake have had upon contemporary poetry, and notwithstanding the high quality of their Christian verse, our anthologists give the greatest space to the non-religious verse of these men. Why should Browning's "Saul," "Cleon," and "Karshish" be consistently omitted in favor of "Andrea del Sarto" and "Fra Lippo Lippi"? In the same spirit of neglect and intolerance is the reaction to T. S. Eliot and W. S. Auden, who some time ago renounced their earlier satirical position for one of Christian faith. In accounting for this situation Mims feels that the vision of our writers and critics, too much steeped in the contemporary, is clouded by the "provincialism of time."

The author seeks to recover for us Christian affirmations as expressed in the works of such men as Spencer, Herbert, Milton, Arnold, Tennyson, Browning, and Gerard Manly Hopkins. The reader may find some fresh insights, especially in the chapters devoted to Donne and Hopkins. The one dealing with Milton will seem a bit dull for some. Unevenness of length in the treatment of these poets is no doubt in part a reflection of the author's own preferences. Blake and Tennyson are given most attention. When it is remembered that American poets of the nineteenth century were strong in faith, some will wonder why a more extended treatment is not accorded them. *The Christ of the Poets* is nevertheless a clear and concise statement of the Christology of the leading English and American poets, and as such it should be profitable reading either as a "refresher" or as an introduction to the poetry of Christianity. Its emphasis on the positive Christian message of these poets helps meet a great need of our time. No one interested

in Christianity as it is reflected in literature should ignore this book.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

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*Great Saints*, by Walter Nigg. Hinsdale, Illinois: Henry Regnery Company, 1948. 286 pages, \$4.75.

This book has been translated into six languages and has made its author internationally famous. Walter Nigg is Professor of Church History at the University of Zurich and is a leading theologian in Europe. He has written several books—including some of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche—having specialized in biographies. He writes not in a "debunking" vein, not as a sentimentalist, nor as advocate of some sectarian eccentricity. This is no ordinary hagiography. He writes with a profound sympathy for the genius of sainthood: his treatment is not superficial, nor patronizing, nor inspired by idle curiosity; it combines admiration, discrimination, and spiritual sensitivity.

The "saints" described here are nine in number, Francis of Assisi, Joan of Arc, Nicholas von Flüe, Therese of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, Gerhard Tersteegen, Vianney of Ars, and Theresa of Lisieux. The author champions a new kind of "hagiography," in which he urges the importance of a loving, patient removal of "the film of dust and grime which, in the course of time, has settled on the figures of the Saints." He points out that hagiography calls for an initial spiritual understanding growing out of a common experience in the things of God. "The religious quality can only be comprehended by the religious quality. Every other description of it is superficial." This book may well mark a new departure in modern analysis of sanctity, the result of orientation in modern psychology combined with an ample theological perspective.

Like his contemporaries, the Spanish Conquistadores, John of the Cross, was an adventurer—but his were spiritual discoveries and conquests. He was so taciturn to be almost inaccessible, however, and an extraordinary campaign is required before the saint is "conquered." Thus, Nigg drama-

tizes the delineation of one of his heroes. John, an ascetic reformer of the Carmelite order, although suffering persecution from his fellow monks, soon learned that it is the "dark night of the soul" which makes possible the shining of the true light. From this modern John the Baptist the world has learned—in his own words—"Never take a man, however holy he may be, to be your model. . . . Follow rather Jesus Christ, who is the summit of perfection and of holiness."

Archbishop Söderblom observes that "the idea of Saint is so important, and is so utterly neglected by evangelical Christianity, that it requires very special treatment." Gerhard Tersteegen is the one Protestant for whom Nigg reserves special treatment. This Lutheran saint deplored the rationalism of the day in Germany, was counselor of Frederick the Great, and protested a "dead orthodoxy" in his church—a many-sided soul. Tersteegen represents a certain "Protestant monasticism" which insisted that sanctification of the believer is no less important than justification of the sinner, a reaction against antinomian tendencies in *sole fidism*.

These two "saints" are typical of the other seven in this hall of fame. The author tends to overstate the case occasionally, and to indulge in superlative. A few more biographical data would make the "saints" more mundane and hence more intelligible to the average reader. On the whole, however, the treatment is as readable as it is challenging. The book appears to be another "straw in the wind," indicating a reaction from a Christianized humanism of the first quarter of this century, in the direction of a greater concern with sin (sins of other people and nations, of course), and a greater appreciation of sanctity.

GEORGE A. TURNER

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*The Preacher and His Preaching*, by W. B. Riley, D.D. Wheaton, Ill.: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1948. 146 pp. \$2.00.

Out of a long and fruitful preaching and teaching ministry, in connection with the

First Baptist Church, Minneapolis and the "Northwestern Bible Schools" of that city, Dr. W. B. Riley garners a storehouse of homiletical values which should not fail to challenge and inspire ministers young and old. Recognizing the variety and worth of many current books of preaching, the author justifies his present venture by drawing our attention to the need of a similar, straightforward text, free from the discursiveness and from the technical lore frequently found in a book of this type. The author devotes five chapters to the preacher and nine to preaching, rightly feeling that the preacher and his preaching are inseparably intertwined. Some interesting chapter titles are, "The Proposed Standardization of the Ministry," "The Ministry for Our Day," "The Preacher and His Professional Ethics," "The Genesis of a Sermon," "The Soul Winning Sermon," "The Sermon Series."

If the young preacher will follow the suggestions for the gathering and preservation of materials as outlined in chapter three, "Secrets of Success in the Ministry," he will be well rewarded for reading the book. To the man who is especially seeking a wholesome readable orientation to the work of preaching, this little book will be an asset.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

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*The Christian Faith and Secularism* edited by J. Richard Spann. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948. 296 pages. \$2.50.

The opening sentence of this symposium expresses the key thought of the volume: "Secularism is no longer, as it was a hundred years ago, an intellectual revolt against theological domination," rather, it has become the atmosphere of our civilization. From this premise the several authors of Part I of the book introduce the reader to both the nature and the historical development of secularism.

In the Foreword, Editor Spann summarizes the definition of secularism as "an evasive, often unconscious, philosophy which does not deny but ignores the pres-



ence and ethical influence of a living God." (p. 5) In short, this volume is simply an examination of the havoc wrought upon contemporary culture by the growing influence of humanistic thought and practice.

Parts II, III, and IV have to do with the application of secularism to various phases of contemporary culture, political life, and social issues, particularly economics. The thirteen chapters which comprise these sections deal with the problem in higher education, in motion pictures, in the church, politics, international relations, organized labor, crime, and individual personality maladjustments. The list of outstanding contributors, including such names as J. Edgar Hoover, Sherwood Eddy, and George N. Shuster, guarantee both the high quality and the thoroughness of these analyses of modern culture.

The final section, "Christianity's Witness in a Secular World," attempts to bring an answer to the problem which has been exposed. Each of the authors in this section emphasizes the fact that Christianity, with its saving knowledge of God, its devotion to the worth of spiritual ideals, and its goal of translating the faith of the church into the daily lives of people, is the sole effective challenge to secularism. Dr. Stuntz, president of Scarritt College, insists that "missionary passion is the genius of Christianity." He calls, therefore, for redoubled effort on the part of the church in her missionary enterprise which speaks not only to the soul but also to the soil in non-Christian or sub-Christian cultures. Bishop Gerald Kennedy reminds the reader of Toynbee's contention that the secular is a province of the Kingdom, and the Christian should realize that "secular affairs demand spiritual foundations." Another author points out that secularism leaves man's needs unmet. Christianity, on the other hand, meets the deepest desire of the human heart.

*The Christian Faith and Secularism* deserves room on the bookshelf of every pastor and religious leader. It does an excellent job of analysis, although some readers would probably agree with the reviewer that more might have been said concerning

religious liberalism's close association with the modern "scientific temper" and humanism—an association to such a degree that a virile Christian faith very nearly disappeared and in its place stood an open door inviting secularism within the ranks of Christianity itself. It is to be appreciated, however, that Charles Darwin and David Strauss are rightfully indicted for their effect in secularizing Christianity. It might also be wished that more stress had been placed upon a return to historical orthodoxy and a definite evangelical emphasis in the Christianity which would best combat secularism.

PAUL F. ABEL

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*Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, by Reidar Thomte. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948. 228 pages. \$3.50.

The urgent need for interpretative and introductory literature to the study of Kierkegaard here finds, within the limits of remarkable brevity, a very satisfactory and stimulating answer. Professor Thomte, a native of Norway, clears a path which will bring understanding and insight to the neophyte as well as to the more serious student of the great Danish philosopher-theologian. A timely, helpful volume worthy of a place on the library shelf of the contemporary minister and seeker after Truth.

The contemporaneousness of one whose pen was stilled a century ago is emphasized by the fact that all but one of Kierkegaard's major works have been made available in English within the short span of twelve years. The Kierkegaardian influence upon modern religious and philosophical thinking is something yet to be reckoned. The evils of his day have lingered despite the passing of the years.

Kierkegaard belonged to an era which had reduced Christianity to an objective system of doctrine and rote-recitation. In popular fancy one became a Christian as a matter of course, since one had been baptized in childhood. Speculative contemplation and a purely objective attitude of detachment replaced choice and decision in

human striving. Hegelianism, with its theory of the higher unity, removed the cutting edge from all contradictions and reduced Christianity to a triviality which might at any moment be transcended.

The burden of Kierkegaard's work as an author, therefore, was dedicated to a revision of the concept of what it means to be a Christian by providing an answer to the individual's ultimate quest, "How am I to become a Christian?" The task he set for himself was admittedly a Socratic one. His writings are calculated to stimulate self-activity and to motivate personal decision.

Ever the bitter foe of Hegelianism, the title of his initial work, *Either/Or*, was itself a battle-cry against the Hegelian watchword "both/and". Unconcerned to establish the objective validity of Christianity, Kierkegaard marked out his realm of philosophical investigation by the now famous thesis: "Truth is subjectivity." The reference is to a person's mode of existence rather than to any theory of knowledge. There is no quarrel with objective knowledge in the realm of science. However, essential knowledge or ethico-religious knowledge is that knowledge that has an essential relationship to the knower. His definition of truth may also be regarded as the formula of faith: "*An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest attainable for an existing individual*".

Three "existence-spheres" arranged on a scale of values contained every mode of life for Kierkegaard. In the aesthetic, in which the individual is magnified as the greatest good and goal in life, existence is essentially enjoyment. A stage higher is the ethical, reached when the sovereignty of self is dethroned by a recognition that man is a part of a social order and under the obligation of becoming the "universal" man. Ethical existence is essentially struggle and victory. At the religious level a collision takes place between the universal-ethical and the demand of the Absolute, a collision which produces in the individual a sense of religious "fear and trembling" and reduces every other relationship to something relative. Religious existence is essentially suffering.

At the religious level Kierkegaard distinguishes between what is called Religion A and Religion B. The former is human religiosity which regards God as immanent in human personality so that a normalcy in moral and religious life can be achieved by means of an inner effort or concentration of the personality. The latter corresponds to Christianity and makes existence paradoxical and particularistic. The appearance of the Eternal in time constitutes the *absurd* and is a break with all human thinking. The paradox of the God-man cannot be comprehended by human understanding. Thus faith becomes the final Christian medium of existence and the revelation of God in history resolves the great problem of the "reconstruction of personality in inwardness".

The experience of the forgiveness of sins means to become a new man. Sin itself, as the severance of the union between God and man, reduced humanity to a new medium of existence. The Incarnation makes possible "sin consciousness" which Kierkegaard held to be the only means of entrance into Christianity. "Sin consciousness", to be distinguished from "guilt consciousness", marks man's awareness of the severance of the union once existing between God and man. Redemption and restoration are made possible by "a descent of the Deity".

In this search to restore respect for Christianity and what it means to be a Christian, Kierkegaard advances beyond the indirect maieutic method to a new educational principle, *Reduplication*. By this is meant simply that the teacher must be what he teaches. Reduplication means the transformation of life in accordance with the truth one objectively knows. Since Christianity is not a doctrine but a communication of existence, unless Christianity is reduplicated in the teacher Christianity is not taught. This accounts for Kierkegaard's great emphasis upon Christ as Pattern as well as Atoner. The atoning work of Christ serves further to furnish the disciple with a confidence and boldness to imitate the pattern. Christianity is not a comfort or an escape mechanism. It means to follow and imitate the Pattern, to accept the judgment of God upon one's life, and to seek the for-

givenness of sin as one who is altogether unworthy of receiving it. Those who are not vitally interested in "bringing ideality into reality" will never fully understand or appreciate Kierkegaard.

CHILTON C. MCPHEETERS

*The Common Ventures of Life*, by D. Elton Trueblood. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949. 124 pages. \$1.00.

This writer of *The Willson Lectures* for 1948 is too well-known to require introduction to the alert reader. As an analyst of the times, Trueblood has released three volumes since the close of the war, all of which have enjoyed a deserved popularity. Now comes a work, designed primarily for those who are outside the formal confines of Christianity, aiming at a recapture of the pattern of life which has been so rudely fractured in our time. Trueblood seeks to re-inject the basic insights of the Christian faith into the thought of such as will read at four points common to human experience, marriage, birth, work, and death.

Underlying his development is the idea that in all these "ventures" we are part of a society which is interconnected by a thousand (often invisible) ties. He seeks to expand the meaning of the term "common" into its larger meaning of community, the relationship here being something like that suggested by the German words *gemein* and *Gemeinde*. Applied to marriage, the enlarged significance of its common quality appears in the persistently social quality of the marriage bond. Our author seeks to point out that marriage in the Christian manner (and he is frankly committed to the value of the Church or Meeting House wedding) involves the essential factor of community participation, implying that marriage is a public affair. In contrast with this, the increased vogue of court or 'marriage parlor' ceremonies is indicative of the fundamental loss of wholeness in current society.

In his chapter on "Birth" Trueblood seeks the social significance of the family, this being capable of being sustained only upon the more fundamental ground of the sacramental character of life. The centrifu-

gal tendencies at work in modern family living concern him no less here than in the volumes of his *Trilogy*. He sees as a cure for this a recapture of the frame of reference of reverence in the presence of the giving of new life. This chapter, as well as the one entitled "Marriage" abounds in reverent common sense. Back of nearly every paragraph lies a problem through which our author has sought to think. His effort is at every point bent toward producing a wholesomeness which grows out a sense of wholeness, of social solidarity under God, and issuing in a strong sense by the sacredness of all life. In this he seeks here, as in all his works, to overcome the radical dualism of sacred-secular which severs the common enterprises of life from religious endeavor.

The author's analysis of the contemporary problem of Work grows out of his feeling that the crisis of our time has destroyed the basic pattern of incentives by which man's productive endeavor is considered to be sacramental. The "interim mentality" produced by world events, the sense of futility and fatalism, and a loss of the sense of the relevance of Christianity, have contributed to this loss. We have lost our sense of vocation. To undertake to reconstruct this destroyed foundation is no small thing; Trueblood recognizes that his will be a slow and many-sided task. He suggests the recapture of the sense of creative production, a revival of the sense of the dignity of labor, and an adjustment of employment-techniques so that the laborer may in some manner participate in, and take pride in, the end-product of his work. More important still, there must somehow be reinstated a sense of *vocation*.

Concerning Death, our author is exercised by the evident failure of men to act upon the impulse of the certainty of their own personal participation in it. He sets himself to the task of pointing the way to the glorification of the sorrow which death inevitably brings. At the heart of his effort is the emphasis upon faith in God, an emphasis all but lost in our time. He shows the elaborate development of burial ceremonies, Parlors, etc. as poor substitutes for faith, and challenges the Church of the time

to repair the breach in the old foundations. His practical suggestions concerning a revision of burial customs are aimed in this direction; one gets the impression, however, that the chapter ends too soon; perhaps Trueblood should have given a number of further pages to the question of the rebuilding of the faith which has been lost.

Taken in the overall, the volume is an excellent contribution to the literature designed to assist the modern man to live. The author seems to overwork, in his opening chapter, the argument from homology in the direction of a repetition of the famil-

iar theme of the essential continuity of all forms of life. This seems to be the accepted thing in books these days. Some will feel that the most important single fact we know about the universe is that spirit is an abrupt appearance, rather than a part of the continuous cosmic process, if by spirit is meant that which distinguishes man from the other forms of life. However, the volume is not intended as a solution of the problem of the matter-spirit dualism, but as a guide to the recapture of the wholeness of life which God intended. It is well suited to this purpose.

HAROLD B. KUHN