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## Book Review. - Literatur

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**Book Review — Literatur**


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All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

**Christianity. An Inquiry into Its Nature and Truth.** By Harris F. Rall. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 363 pages, 5¾×8¼. Price, \$2.50.

This is the fifteenth volume of the Bross Library, published in the golden jubilee year of the Bross Foundation of Lake Forest University (Lake Forest College). The fiftieth anniversary Bross prize (\$15,000) attracted 214 manuscripts from 31 States and 9 foreign counties, and from these Dr. Rall's contribution was selected as the best. The Foundation had its origin in Mr. Bross's desire to establish a memorial for his son Nathaniel, who died in 1856 at the age of five. After the completion of the Trust Agreement in 1879 pious Mr. Bross remarked in his diary: "God grant that he [Nathaniel] may through this fund preach the Gospel of our blessed Savior to the end of time." Mark Hopkin's *Evidences of Christianity* (Vol. I of the Foundation) fully satisfied the purpose of the Foundation, as stated in these words. So, too, did James Orr's learned work *The Problem of the Old Testament* (Vo. III of the Foundation), and so also Douglas Clyde Macintosh's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Vol. XIII), though with less distinctiveness. But Rall's *Christianity* does not "preach the Gospel of our blessed Savior," for he rejects traditional theology as untenable. "For traditional theology the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity is very simple. . . . When He [God] gives men the Bible or establishes the Church, the result is absolute and inerrant." Against this orthodox tenet Dr. Rall argues: "The divine is not a tangible, thinglike substance, thrust down from some upper level; it is the life of the Spirit realized in human experience, that is, in human insight and thought, in deed and devotion. The divine, therefore, must always be relative for us, relative to man's apprehension, to his stage of development, to his response." (P. 68 f.) In other words, there is no fixed Christian truth in the sense of Scripture and the Christian creeds. With the same emphasis he rejects the answer of "traditional Christianity" that "Christianity is true, other religions are false; Christianity is original and unique because it came direct and perfect from the hand of God." (P. 70.) Also this Christian doctrine is untenable according to Dr. Rall. "The distinctive nature of Christianity is found not in its institutional forms, in doctrine or organization or code or culture, but rather in a conviction concerning God and the way of life which has its abiding inspiration and direction in the person of Jesus." (P. 71.) This is tantamount to a complete rejection of the entire doctrinal content of Christian theology. With regard to Christianity's relation to other faiths and to the work of missions the writer says: "Christianity is a religion of inclusion, not of exclusion, and wherever it finds truth and love, there it sees God and rejoices." (P. 81.) This is the old fatal concession of Liberalism to all non-Christian religions, which denies Christ and His precious Gospel *in toto*. Keeping this in mind, one can readily understand how the

author can place Jesus on the same level with Buddha, Socrates, Paul, Savonarola, and Luther. "They were the heretics whom men cast out of the synagog, but their God was the God of truth." (P. 39.) The reviewer cannot conceive of any more vicious way of betraying Christ than just this. Salvation is secured, according to Dr. Rall, by "the right relation based on insight." (P. 40.) These quotations may suffice to show that the Christianity of Dr. Rall is not Christianity at all but artfully disguised Modernism, which, while discarding the kernel, holds to the shell. Still the book is of value also to the orthodox student. In the first place, it shows by convincing logic how utterly unreasonable all forms of Modernism are which despair of finding any spiritual truth at all. Again, the author in his defense of such religious truths as he still holds cannot but attack the whole phalanx of atheistic and agnostic antagonists of the Christian faith, so that the reader who carefully studies the book *ipso facto* becomes well acquainted with practically all major destructive theological tendencies of today. Lastly, while the author's theology is by no means orthodox, he supplies the orthodox theologian with weapons of attack against the shallow and hollow arguments of Modernists of all sorts. The book closes with an apparently orthodox note, which may mislead the reader who does not take time to analyze the writer's own doctrinal position. He says: "The highest reach of Christianity in relation to this problem [of evil] is seen in its symbol of the cross, the revelation of what sin is and of what the cost of life and good is to God and man. . . . Here in the end is the distinctive Christian contribution, . . . faith as trust in the God of Love who has spoken to us, faith as devotion to the way which this God indicates to us." (P. 344.) But Dr. Rall's "cross" is not that of St. Paul, nor is his "faith" "trust in God" *propter Christum*. Dr. Rall here employs orthodox language but in an unorthodox sense, as other expressions in the book make clear. Also in this respect he walks docilely in the footsteps of the founding fathers of Modernism: Schleiermacher and Ritschl. The title of the book, too, is misleading; for what the author contends for is not Christianity, but right-wing Liberalism against left-wing Liberalism.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**Man in Revolt. A Christian Anthropology.** By Emil Brunner. Translated from the German, *Der Mensch im Widerspruch*, by Olive Wyon. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 564 pages, 5¼×8½. Price, \$6.00.

This book is directed against the glorification and deification of man. According to Modernism man is the certainty and God the problem. The divine immanence theory of Schleiermacher, Hegel, Ritschl, and liberal theology holds that man is talking about God when he is talking loudly about himself, and that God is found when we seek the best in man. The liberal theologian will therefore grant a quantitative — not a qualitative — difference between God and man. Whether he is rooted in the tradition of Idealism, Romanticism, or Naturalism, the Liberalist bases religion on empirical data: on reason and religious experience, and proudly rejects all *a-priori* knowledge. But the self-reliance of the liberal theologian has received some severe jolts in recent years. The

younger theologians are becoming increasingly suspicious of the methods of Modernism. Because of their training in rationalistic seminaries they still spurn the challenging voice of orthodoxy. But their self-complacency has been thoroughly shaken, and now many of them are floundering aimlessly. Some have learned to see the fallacy of Liberalism through their study of the "philosophy of suffering" as developed by the Russian novelist Dostoevski and his interpreter Berdyaev. Others were rudely awakened by the challenge of the Barthian school. "In Karl Barth liberal theology brought forth its own conqueror." (Sasse, *Here We Stand*, 155.) The Barthians are Calvinists, and their doctrine of the sovereignty of God places a tremendous tension between God and man. Barthian anthropology is diametrically opposed to that of liberal theology. This becomes very evident in Brunner's book. It is difficult to foretell the influence which Barthian theology will exert on "American" theology. While there is wide-spread discontent with modernistic theology and great interest in Barthianism, the Barthian paradoxical terminology does not fit into the pattern of American thinking, nor does the philosophizing of Barthianism satisfy the activist program of the typical American theologian and Social Gospeler. There are relatively few American theologians of prominence who follow the Barthian theological procedure. Reinhold Niebuhr's recent Gifford lectures, the first volume of which has just appeared under the title *The Nature of Man*, the writings of Edwin Lewis, Wilhelm Pauck, Paul Tillich, George Richards, Paul Lehman, et al., seem to follow Barthian procedure at least to some extent. Whether Brunner's immense volume will deeply affect American theology is doubtful. It is regrettable that Brunner is unnecessarily repetitious, that the central theme is obscured by too much antithetical material, that his paradoxical language is hard to follow. *Vor lauter Bäumen sieht man den Wald nicht mehr.*

We shall let Brunner himself give you the synopsis of his book: "Only in the light of man's contradiction between creation and sin do we see man as he actually is and how he differs from all other living creatures. . . . This contradiction cannot be understood from the point of view of an *a-priori* philosophy but only from the standpoint of faith; i. e., in order to look into these depths, we must take up that position above man which would be impossible to us in our own strength, namely, in the Word of God. This position is given us by the incarnation of the Son of God and by the Spirit of God. To take up this position means to believe. From the point of view of faith we can understand the contradiction in man in such a way that we see him as one who stands between the creation in the image of God and sin, the false independence of man." (P. 478.) To understand Brunner's anthropology, one must keep in mind that Barthianism claims to be the "theology of the Word of God." Barthians are essentially dialecticians and therefore attempt to solve all theological problems through a paradoxical approach. To understand man, we must understand the paradox of Creator and creature; for no greater contrast can be conceived than the one which exists between God as Creator and man as a creature. Because of this paradox man stands in no relation to God unless he is confronted by the Word of God, the eternal Logos. Barth carries this

premise to such extremes that in reality there can be no knowledge of God at all unless God has confronted the individual in his crisis. In his condemnation of the Roman *theologia naturalis* and empiricism of Modernism he denies the *revelatio generalis* taught in Rom. 1:19-21. It was on this point that Barth and Brunner definitely came to a parting of the ways. Brunner's present volume is in part a refutation of Barth's extreme position. As an adherent of the "theology of the Word of God" Brunner maintains, like Barth, that God must confront the individual if he is to become a true personal human being; but differing from Barth, he holds that God has actually confronted all men in the Word, the eternal Logos. According to Barth only the "believer" who has "made the leap into the unknown" has answered the call of the Word, whereas Brunner holds that the Word of God, the Logos, is the source of every man's being. "Even the being of the sinner is a being in God's Word, though a perverted being-in-the-Word-of-God." (P. 67.) "The fundamental idea of my book is that even the unbeliever is still related to God and that he is responsible." (P. 11.) But in refuting Barth, Brunner appears to swing so far in the opposite direction that he comes dangerously close to the camp of such Neo-Thomists as J. Maritain; for Brunner holds that "the natural and religious truth about human existence lie very close to one another." (P. 63.) The starting-point of Brunner's anthropology is the creation through the Logos. But if the Logos is the "ground for all created existence," wherein does man differ from the rest of creation? Brunner answers: Man stands in a twofold relation to the Logos, first as Creator and then as the Light which enlightens all men, John 1:3. Only because man stands in relation to the Logos as Creator and as Light, does he become a responsible human personality, or, in Brunner's words, "a being-in-the-Word-of-God; a being-for-love; a being-in-responsibility." "Man was not in his origin a responsible being, but he is still a responsible being, even in his irresponsibility, there where he denies his responsibility and sets himself in opposition to his origin. . . . Even distorted knowledge is knowledge and is infinitely more—and at the same time infinitely less—than ignorance." (P. 79.) (The book abounds in such paradoxical statements, which unnecessarily retard the reading. Did the translator or the reviewer fail to get Brunner's thought? Or is Brunner purposely so obscure?)

The dogmatical basis of Brunner's anthropology is discussed in the chapters on man's origin, the loss of the divine image, and the present conflict in man between divine determination and human self-determination. (Pp. 82, 204.) Brunner pronounces a scathing denunciation on the various philosophical views concerning man, especially those of Idealism and Materialism. He shows very effectively that Idealism erases the boundary between the divine and the human and virtually elevates man above God. Idealism, as developed by Plato, adopted by Neo-Platonists (the Roman Catholic "Only the flesh is the seat of sin"), modernized by Schleiermacher, Hegel, Ritschl, maintains that the spirit is the essential part of man and the corporeal only accidental. Brunner is correct in the main when he insists that Idealism views corporeality as the real source of sin and thereby reduces sin to the mere remnants

of man's "bestial nature." Whereas Idealism concerns itself almost exclusively with the spiritual part of man, Materialism overemphasizes the corporeal and views man essentially as an animal. The one philosophy makes man an idol; the other, an animal. Brunner makes a successful attack on these two philosophical systems, which are playing such a devastating role in modern liberal theology. (Pp. 187 ff.) How does Brunner view the divine image, the Fall, and the present revolt in man? He does not accept the Lutheran definition. His approach is that of the dialectician, stressing the paradox of Creator—Creature. Man is created in the Word, the Logos, and has the capacity and therefore the responsibility to respond to this Word which stands over against him in Christ. (P. 96.) Man, in distinction from the animals, was created with obligation to make a decision. But the initiative to make this decision comes from God as a gift. Brunner's definition of the divine image is briefly man's relation of responsibility to God, a relation which does not cease, though it may be changed from a state of being-in-love to a state of being-under-the-Law. (P. 105.) Brunner, an ardent advocate of the descent theory, has rejected the "ecclesiastical" doctrine of Adam and Eve in favor of the "scientific knowledge" concerning man's origin. (P. 87.) "It is not Adam of prehistory who is created in the image of God, it is you and me [I?] and everybody. The primitive state is not an historical period, but an historical moment, the moment of divinely created origin, which we only know in connection with its contrast, with sin." (P. 111.) Brunner denies both the creation of man in the image of God as recorded in Genesis and the fall of man. To him they are not historical events but "superhistorical truths." (P. 119 ff.) "The fatality of the Fall consists in the fact that every human being, in his own person, and in union with the rest of humanity, every day renews this fall afresh and cannot help doing so, that he is in process of falling and cannot escape from it, that he cannot get back to his origin." (P. 172.) Brunner says that the account of the Fall must be rejected not so much because of scientific premises (evolution) as for religious reasons, since the traditional view of the Fall denies man's responsibility and, as the term *Erbsuende* indicates, makes man responsible for guilt in which he had no part. (Pp. 120—122.) According to Brunner the image of God consists in this, that man recognizes himself as a being-in-responsibility. The Fall therefore is enacted in every individual when he defies God and denies this responsibility. "Like some one who shrieked too loudly and has lost his voice, so we have been too boastful of our freedom, and now freedom has been lost." (P. 135.) When the relation of responsibility toward God is broken, "the personal content of the person, the being-in-the-love-of-God, is gone. . . . God has been removed from the center, and we are in the center of the picture; our life has become 'eccentric.' . . . As upon a chess-board which has been shaken all the individual chessmen are still unbroken, yet at the same time everything is meaningless, so is the nature of man." (P. 136 f.) Man is continually in the Word of God, which is either grace or wrath. Because of man's enmity this Word becomes the accusing law, and man—who is always a being-in-the-Word—is a being-in-the-wrath-of-God. (P. 486 f.)

Brunner says some very pointed things to the Liberalist: "All our modern progress has not brought us any nearer to essential truth. Ultimately, does not an honest little sparrow know more about the mystery of nature than we who are so clever? O irony of *homo sapiens*! O the tragicomedy of man, who confuses himself with God! . . . Humanity: the battle-field of demons; the human spirit: the arsenal of the instruments for the destruction of life. How impotent is human reason in construction, how almighty in destruction!" (Pp. 182, 184.) But, after all, Brunner does not present the Scriptural doctrine concerning the divine image, the Fall, and original sin. He fails to depict original sin as rebellion against God but views it primarily as a contradiction and revolt *within man*. He denies the Scriptural doctrine of original guilt because "it equates the state of being a sinner with a child's being blue-eyed because his father had blue eyes." (P. 148.) Our primary objection to Brunner's anthropology, however, is the fact, that in spite of the claim that he is a theologian of the Word of God, his premises are based on rationalism. In short, Brunner, who claims to attack Modernism, uses the modernistic technique. His basic concept of man as a being-in-the-Word is, after all, the Schleiermacher premise. Though he apparently condemns man as being utterly depraved, he so elevates the natural man that he can find the unconditioned truth. "Man must seek what holds the world together at its heart, and his perceptive spirit bows before the law of the true, before the demands of Objective Truth. Who will deny that in this search for truth there is something holy? The idea of the unconditioned truth is not derived from the Primal Word, in which the spirit of man is based, even after he is fallen." (P. 174.) The American Liberal says: "Sin is a quest for God." Brunner's enthusiastic and rationalistic approach to anthropology is evident particularly in this, that he fails to employ Scriptural proof but bases his entire argumentation on philosophy and psychology. This becomes very apparent as Brunner traces the contradiction in man in its effects on man's personality, on human freedom and unfreedom, on the relation between body and soul, on the family, the community, husband and wife, on life and death. This section covers over 250 pages. In the Epilog Brunner presents his views on the removal of the contradiction between man as he is and as he is intended to be. (Pp. 478-495.) God's primal word of love comes to me as a new event, whereby God wipes out the past. Faith "is the power to say 'yes' to the originally creative, eternally electing Word of God, man's return from his enmity against God to his Origin." Only in faith in Christ as the eternal Word of God can we know our sin. When man has permitted himself to be told the real truth about his condition, his faith will renounce the sovereignty over himself, and God will restore him again to his original position. Thus faith is the *restitutio imaginis*, and the atonement means no more than "the rediscovery of man's original position." Brunner has clearly demonstrated in this volume that, while the Theology of Crisis has been a corrective of Liberal Theology in some points, it nevertheless has remained in the sphere of philosophy. The Kantian approach is clearly discernible, for Brunner limits revelation to the sphere of reason and excludes nature and history as entirely meaningless. This

is apparent in his time-eternity concept and his brushing aside of the "historical" Jesus in favor of the "superhistorical" Christ. Schleiermacher's basic thoughts are also very much in evidence, for "the crisis" as a source of religious knowledge is essentially the same as Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence upon God." F. E. MAYER

**The Lutheran Hymnal.** Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 852 pages, 6×8½. Price, \$1.50.

With all the publicity given to the preparation of this book, the resulting wide-spread interest manifested by suggestions and constructive criticism offered, and the truly phenomenal amount of orders placed,—the last count is 570,000,—there does not seem to be much need for a review except to say: Here is the book; take it and use it. It shall be said, however, that it is a magnificent production which reflects credit on all concerned. It will not satisfy every one of us altogether; no one, least of all the members of the Hymnology Committee, expected that it would satisfy all the million-odd members of the Synodical Conference; but it will go as far toward meeting all legitimate wishes as that is possible in one volume. The high aim ever before the compilers in their twelve years' work is stated in the Preface: "to produce a hymnal containing the best of the hymnodical treasures of the Church, both as to text and tunes, in accord with the highest standards of Christian worship." They accepted and followed these principles: 1. Hymns must be of intrinsic value as to content and distinctively Christian. 2. Translations must be of good form and in idiomatic English. 3. Tunes must be suited to the text and good church music, exceptions to be made only in such cases in which texts and tunes were so wedded as to be practically inseparable. In the liturgical section the committee made no changes in the liturgy as such, merely simplifying rubrics, correcting discrepancies, and supplying additional material. Results of their work were published in five numbers of the *Lutheran Witness* and two special pamphlets, during the period 1934—1939; all criticisms and suggestions submitted were considered; in April, 1940, the manuscript was turned over to Concordia Publishing House."—When Dr. Walther and his associates prepared the *Kirchengesangbuch fuer Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden*, they, too, set up a number of principles by which the selection of hymns should be governed. First of these was: "In the selection of the adopted hymns the chief consideration was that they be pure in doctrine." That was the foremost criterion for this hymnal, too. Some one has rightly said: "Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who may make its laws." The last time Dr. F. Pieper rose to speak in the *Eintagskonferenz*, he described the poor instruction he received in Germany preparatory for confirmation; in Luther's Small Catechism he and his fellow-pupils never got beyond the Seventh Commandment; yet they had a fair knowledge of Christian faith because mothers and grandmothers at home taught them to sing the good old staunchly confessional Lutheran hymns. In this transition period some of us have lost sight of this use of the hymnal in home, school, and Sunday-school.



Let us give to our children that treasure which we of the older generation received from our parents.—Dr. Walther continues in the list of principles: "That they [the hymns] had found almost general acceptance within the true German Lutheran Church and thereby had received the almost unanimous testimony that they had come forth out of the true spirit." Essentially this principle, too, was retained in the present edition; however, it was widened to take in not only German but also Scandinavian, Slovak, American, and English sources. So the book contains 313 original hymns, 267 written by English, Welsh, Scotch, or Irish, one by a Canadian, 45 by American poets. Of the 347 translations, 248 are from German, 46 from Latin, 31 from Scandinavian, 9 from Greek, 6 from Slovak, 2 from French, 2 from Italian, and one each from Dutch, Welsh, and Finnish originals. A classification of the composers also shows a great variety: 18 are American, 59 British, 58 German, 4 Scandinavian, 3 French, 2 Italian, and one each Dutch, Finnish, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, and Slovak. It is truly an ecumenical hymnal.—Two further principles Dr. Walther cites which may give a further indication why certain hymns were selected and others rejected: "that they express not so much the changing conditions of individual persons as rather the language of the whole Church, because the book was to be used primarily in public worship; and, finally, that they, though bearing the imprint of Christian simplicity, be not merely rimed prose, but the products of a truly Christian poesy."—The chairman of the Hymnology Committee, speaking for all the members, made the closing words of Dr. Walther their own: "The editors have been fully conscious of the difficulty of their task; they have altogether despaired of their own wisdom and pleaded earnestly with God for the illumination and direction of His Holy Spirit and especially for the gift of trying and discerning the spirits." To our Lord, then, let us give thanks for a work well done; and let us diligently use it to His glory. THEO. HOYER

**The Church Manual of Olavus Petri.** Translated by O. V. Anderson. Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill. 61 pages. Stiff paper covers. Price, 50 cts.

Olavus Petri (1493—1552) was the outstanding leader of his day in the Reformation of Sweden. His *Manual* has the distinction of being the first book of its kind to appear in the Protestant world. It was published in Stockholm, April 28, 1529. It was intended for the use of the clergy who wished to conduct their services in the language of the people and to give an evangelical character to the services and rituals of the Swedish Church.

The contents of the *Manual* is as follows:

1. Olavus Petri to the Christian Reader.
2. Holy Baptism in Swedish.
3. The Solemnization of Matrimony.
4. The Churching of Women.
5. Order for the Visitation of the Sick.
6. The Burial of the Dead: a. How One Shall Consecrate the Body; b. How One Shall Commit the Body.
7. An order for Ministering to Those who are to be Executed.
8. Conclusion.

The translation is well done, and the student of liturgies will find the work both interesting and instructive. W. G. POLACK