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## Book Review. - Literatur

Walter R. Roehrs

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## Book Review

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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 18, Mo.

**Ancient Records and the Bible.** By J. McKee Adams. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1946. 397 pages, 6¼×9. \$3.75.

In evaluating the purpose and the merit of a book with the title *Ancient Records and the Bible*, the following short parable is in place:

My father always told me the truth. I trusted him implicitly and never had reason to doubt his word. Upon his death I received his autobiography. In it he sketched the part that he played in the conquest of the West. He was in the thick of it, and the account throbs with life. For me it is a true story, because my father was truthful. However, it grips me to the extent that I would like to know more about the setting of the events in which he had such a leading role. I read with the greatest interest what other men wrote who were contemporaries of my father. I find that they tell me that conditions of the frontier were exactly as my father described them. I make a trip to the West to see whether I can discover some of the old landmarks. I find the log house in which my father lived. I relive the encounter that he had in this log house when the Indians attacked him. Because my father was in this story, I leave no stone unturned in my search for materials to throw light on the times of his life.

Another reason for such research, however, is forced upon me. Some people who have read my father's diary tell me: "It can't be true. It can't be true, for example, because there were no Indians in this territory when your father was there. In fact, the whole situation at that time was so different that we cannot accept your father's account as trustworthy." Again I spare no effort to corroborate my father's words from the words of other men and from present-day remains. I do not need this vindication for myself. I knew the story was true; my faith in my father's veracity had never been shaken.

Such is the place of archaeology in Christian faith. My Father's Word is true, not, in the first place, because I can prove that it squares with historical research. I have accepted it as true by a much higher test: the test of faith. I shall never be able to prove this faith in my Father's account by an empirical process of reasoning. I shall never be able to bring others to an implicit trust in my Father's Word merely by a logical demonstration from potsherds and ancient inscriptions. They must get this conviction as I did through this Word itself, and the power of my Father, who works through this Word.

The salvation which my faith knows and embraces came from eternity. But my Father worked it out in time by human beings; ethnic and social factors, historical events. Nothing pleases me more than to find out as much as possible about these human agencies and to trace as much as I can the footsteps of my Father in the process of bringing me redemption. It delights me to see more and more of redemption's stage setting coming to light.

I would be happy and content to use my findings in history and archaeology for this purpose. But there are also people who say:

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"Your redemption could not have happened as your Father says. The events in time could not have been as your Father depicts them." Hence I must also use, reluctantly but fearlessly, what I read in ancient records and what the spade digs up to show that my Father's footsteps are there. The nations, the events, the movements of history that my Father used to bring about my eternal happiness are not fiction but fact. I do not, therefore, contradict my faith when I turn to history and archaeology to verify faith against objections.

From this viewpoint we are glad to bring to the attention of our readers this recent addition to the growing literature on archaeology. It will grieve the reader to hear that the author is no longer alive. In fact, the book appeared posthumously. "Fortunately, he had completed the manuscript for a new book, *Ancient Records and the Bible*, before his death, but he never saw it published. The responsibility of putting the new book into final shape for print fell upon two young men, his fellows in Biblical Introduction, William H. Morton and Marc H. Lovelace—he expected this book to be his greatest contribution in the field of Biblical Archaeology. It was obvious that he hoped that it would render even greater service than *Biblical Backgrounds*, which is used so extensively in colleges and seminaries. — Through prodigious work, research, and many personal visits to the Orient he acquired a mass of knowledge, some of which has been put into book form." These words occur in the Foreword written by President Ellis A. Fuller of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. J. McKee Adams was a member of that faculty.

As the title of the book *Ancient Records and the Bible* indicates, the author has made a selection for the purpose of his book from the vast findings of archaeology in the Near East. It is a highly welcome feature of the book that it treats only such data as have a bearing on the Old Testament account. Volumes have been written on specific questions even in this restricted area. Dr. Adams has, therefore, limited his investigation to a number of important debated issues. "Among these has been the question of the possibility and probability of early Hebrew records contemporary with the initial and middle phases of Hebrew history — i. e., during the Patriarchal and Mosaic periods, as well as in the area of the Monarchy, where copious literary evidences are freely admitted by existence." His conclusion on this question he states thus: "The net result of this inquiry . . . leads us to believe that there was no period in Hebrew history when the writers could not have had current records and that the internal evidence of these sacred documents demand an earlier date for their composition than criticism has heretofore been willing to admit. Whatever the interpolations or insertions, whatever the editorial revisions or redactions, these records may be regarded as substantially the same as when first preached."

Much space is also devoted to show that these records square with other accounts. "It is not merely chance that where the Bible and archaeology have met they have been found to be in substantial agreement. In those areas where they have not met we may still believe that they are not contradictory; they may be found to be complementary and supplementary."

The chronology of these records receives considerable attention. "The recovery of Assyrian and Babylonian documents of first-rate

importance, together with isolated monuments bearing on historical records of the Hebrew people, have made it possible to reconstruct a chronological framework of Old Testament history which offers help in harmonizing the Hebrew accounts with those of contemporary nations."

The author is aware of his limitations. He closes his book with these remarks: "Without announcing dogmatically the solution of all our problems and the elimination of all the tangled questions confronting the earnest student of the Bible, we have sought the truth, knowing fully that it alone has any secure footing either in reason or in faith."

The reader will perhaps not agree with every interpretation of the historical data as here presented. Thus, for example, one would like to see a discussion of the identification of Amraphel (Gen. 14) and Hammurabi of the famous law code. Recent studies of Babylonian records have placed Hammurabi a good century or two later than 2000 B. C. Accordingly, even if Amraphel is the phonetic equivalent of Hammurabi, Abraham would have been contemporary with an earlier Hammurabi but not the author of the Babylonian code. Perhaps the author's premature death prevented his taking cognizance of this very recent development. On other questions the reader at times may also wonder if the data at hand fully warrant the conclusions drawn.

Archaeological books written from the viewpoint as indicated by the quotations above have been few and far between. For that reason *Ancient Records and the Bible* is welcomed and heartily recommended. It is not too technical to be read and enjoyed by every Bible student, professional or layman.

We noted a few misprints. Page 178: the close of Hezekiah's reign should be given as 699—8 instead of 799—8; page 221: fourth line from the top should read Thutmosis III and not Thutmosis II.

WALTER R. ROEHRs

**The Abiding Word.** Edited by Theodore Laetsch, D. D. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 593 pages (with Index), 9¼ × 6½. \$2.00.

In a subtitle this book is described as "an anthology of doctrinal essays for the year 1945," and this explains why this excellent new volume has appeared. To bequeath the doctrinal heritage (at least in part) of the first century of our Church to those following in the second, a special committee selected a number of doctrinal subjects which were treated by our fathers at their synodical conventions or otherwise, too, in special articles or books, to be presented to our synodical gatherings during 1945 and 1946, the two years immediately preceding Synod's Centennial. This, then, is the first volume of essays, both doctrinal and practical, that were read during 1945. It contains twenty-seven essays on the principal doctrines of the Bible, such as "The Doctrine of Creation," "The Person of Christ," "The Person of the Holy Ghost," "The Clearness and Sufficiency of Scripture," "The Proper Use of the Bible," and so forth. Among the practical topics treated are "Prayer," "The Use of God's Word in the Home," "Mission Work in the Apostolic Age and Its Lessons for Today," "Christian Stewardship," and others. The book therefore is a brief, practical dogmatics with much added information usually presented in manuals of pastoral theology. The essayists have endeavored to

restate in brief and telling presentation the chief teachings of our fathers. The work has been well edited. There is uniformity in approach and organization of the essays, and mechanically the book has been made as attractive as possible, with bold, clear type, excellent paper, handy format, plenty of margin, so that it is a volume pleasing within and without. It is to sell at the remarkably low price of \$2.00, which means a decided loss to our publishing concern unless the sales volume is exceedingly great. And it should be great, for here is a work that should be read within and without our Church, by laymen no less than by pastors, for here is found the pure teaching of our Church in brief and popular, but nevertheless accurate and exhaustive presentation. The reviewer hopes that this and the second volume of this collection of essays will be purchased for all our school and church libraries and that there will be no pastoral study in which it will not be treasured. Let pastors not only recommend the book to their lay members, both men and women, but let them also study the essays together with them, explaining them point for point and with careful exposition of their emphases. If this is done, the book will become a blessing to thousands, and our Church under God will faithfully adhere to God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure, to which it is dedicated by its constitution and history.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

**Revelation and Reason.** By Emil Brunner. 440 pages, 9¼×6¼. \$4.50.

**Man in Revolt.** Same author. 568 pages, 9¼×6¼. \$6.00.

**The Divine-Human Encounter.** Same author. 207 pages, 8¼×5½. \$2.50.

**The Mediator.** Same author. 600 pages, 9¼×6¼. \$6.00.

**The Divine Imperative.** Same author. 728 pages, 9¼×6¼. \$6.50.

All five volumes published by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

The fact that Westminster Press is publishing, respectively re-publishing, the outstanding books of Emil Brunner, indicates the relatively large following which this Swiss author and theologian is at present enjoying in America. Brunner, probably more so than Barth, has acquainted the American theological world with the crisis theology. This is due to the fact that Brunner has lectured extensively in America and that his theology is probably closer to the liberal tradition than Barth. Brunner, especially in his *Divine Imperative*, has transferred the continental European thinking to the British and American theological world. As time and space permit, these contributions by Brunner will be reviewed in these columns. Two reviews are offered in this issue.

F. E. M.

*Revelation and Reason* was first published in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1941, under the title *Offenbarung und Vernunft: Die Lehre von der christlichen Glaubenserkenntnis*. It is now offered to English-speaking theologians in an excellent translation, prepared by Olive Wyon, bearing the subtitle "The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge." This, however, is not an accurate rendering of *Die Lehre von der christlichen Glaubenserkenntnis*. It therefore leaves the reader somewhat in obscurity as to the real problem with which the author endeavors to cope in his learned monograph,

a problem which embraces the essential point of all *prolegomena* to systematic theology. Brunner, as a Barthian, who, however, very often follows his own bent of mind, does not approach the problem of revelation and reason as orthodox systematics has done in the past. Orthodox systematic theology, both Reformed and Lutheran, accepted the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament as the divine revelation or the Word of God, given by divine inspiration, and regarded reason as functioning in the acceptance of the divine revelation of Scripture merely as instrumental, that is, as the faculty of perceiving and comprehending what the divine words of Scripture declare. But Brunner does not accept the "theory of verbal inspiration" (pp. 7-9). To him the doctrine of verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture is not an adequate formulation of the authority of the Bible. It is rather the product of the views of late Judaism, and not of Christianity (p. 127 f.). Brunner therefore does not identify the Bible with God's Word. Nor is the Bible to him the infallible source and norm of faith (p. 10 f.). For this reason, so he believes, the historical criticism of the Bible must not be regarded as the work of the devil, inimical to the Christian faith, but rather as something very helpful toward understanding the Word of God (p. 292). At this point Brunner's departure from orthodox theology appears to the readers most clearly, for he rejects the received Christian doctrine concerning the inspiration, infallibility, and authority of Scripture as the Word of God *in toto*. Moreover, he holds that critical research has proved that there is no real unity between the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New Testament so far as their teachings are concerned (p. 293). He therefore rejects the Christian doctrine of the oneness of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. But what, then, is the Word of God, if it is not the word of Scripture? Very paradoxically Brunner teaches that while everything that has been said before is true, the historical self-manifestation of God is nevertheless offered to faith in the books of the Prophets and Apostles (p. 118). Above all, God comes to us in the Scriptures in the person of Jesus Christ, and only in this historical revelation of Christ do we encounter the personal God (p. 409). The Scripture words of God thus matter very little (if anything at all) to Brunner. It is in the last analysis only the overpowering impression which Christ makes on the individual that counts. To encounter God in Christ means to see in Him the personal God both in His justice and His mercy. Faith, according to Brunner, means to be gripped by the "Word of God" (the personal Word, which is Christ Jesus), so that a person submits in the very center of his being to Him to whom he belongs (p. 421). As Brunner thus fails to teach the orthodox Christian doctrine of Scripture, so also he fails to teach the traditional Christian doctrine concerning the Law and Gospel, repentance and faith, justification and sanctification. Instead, he substitutes for the old faith a new philosophy of religion which is largely based upon ancient thought forms employed by Christian church teachers. But where does reason fit into his scheme of theology? Brunner emphasizes the fact that reason is taken by the "Word of God" into its service through faith (p. 429). Yet, on the other hand, reason also serves as a free agent. Repentance according to Brunner is accomplished in an act of reason (p. 430). In repentance reason renounces its autonomy (*ibid.*). As Brunner holds, that is repentance if the

autonomous self resigns (*ibid.*). Brunner thus uses the old Christian terms of *contritio* and *fiducia cordis* in new applications in which they are eviscerated of their former content. In general, Brunner speaks more clearly than does Barth. So also he speaks more briefly than Barth does. We recommend the book to all who are interested in Neo-Orthodoxy, for here Brunner lays down principles that are basic for his system of thought. But let the reader bear in mind that Brunner really does not solve the problem of revelation and reason in a satisfactory manner. His conception of revelation is extremely nebulous, and so also his conception of the function of reason in its reaction to revelation is very vague. Because Brunner's whole theology is subjectivistic, and that of course means rationalistic and liberal, he cannot solve the problem which he faces, for that problem belongs into the field of revelation and so can be perceived only by faith. Reason brought to bear upon it, only evades it. As a departure from the divine truth Brunner's Neo-Modernism must fail to satisfy man's desire for assurance of truth and salvation, for there is neither truth nor assurance of salvation in unbelief.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

*Man in Revolt.* This book, translated by Olive Wyon from the German, *Der Mensch im Widerspruch*, 1937, was first published in London in 1939. The present edition is an exact reprint. The undersigned reviewed *Man in Revolt* in C. T. M., XII, pp. 714f. Among other things, we there stated that Brunner denounced the traditional philosophies concerning man, especially those of idealism, which virtually makes man an idol, and materialism, which reduces man to the level of an animal. Brunner views the divine image as the obligation to make a decision, but that the initiative to make such a decision comes from God as a gift. In other words, the divine image is man's relation of responsibility to God, a condition which man does not lose. The Fall, according to Brunner, consists in the fact that man denies his responsibility, and therefore every individual, personally and collectively, re-enacts his fall daily. As an advocate of the evolution theory, he denies the Scriptural view of original sin, but views the Fall as a symbol of the fact that man does not want to accept his responsibility toward God. Brunner denies total depravity, and views man's sin as the removal of God from the center and in his pride placing himself into the center. Since man has placed himself in the position of God, he no longer recognizes his obligation toward God, and thereby has really forfeited his original essence. Man is in revolt not only with God, but also with himself, and this revolt or contradiction becomes evident in man's various psychoses. There are tensions in man's personality, in the relation between his body and soul; tensions in the family, community, between life and death. The removal of these contradictions is effected, according to Brunner, when God's first word of love comes to man as a new event and thus wipes out the past. Only through faith in Christ, who is the eternal Word of God, can we know our sin. When man has faithfully listened to God's Word about his own condition, his faith will prompt him to renounce his pride, and he will again accept the man-God relation. Thus man's atonement is accomplished, for he has rediscovered his original place and relation to God and is enabled again to become that for which he was created. Thus he becomes a true person.

F. E. MAYER