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Book Review Article

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BOOK REVIEW ARTICLE

THE NEW CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA — A REVIEW ARTICLE

FREDERICK W. DANKER

During the years 1907—14 appeared the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Charles George Herbermann and a number of other scholars. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia*,¹ prepared at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., was designed to take into account the "profound changes that have taken place in the world in general and in the life and work of the Church in particular." William J. McDonald is editor in chief, assisted by 27 staff members and a list of contributors (almost 200 pages long) drawn from broad areas of world scholarship. The 15-volume set is sturdily bound, and the paper and print are of a quality befitting the scholarly tenor of the whole. Numerous reproductions of art objects, some in color, photographs, and charts, contribute to the reader's pleasure and store of information.

The sympathetic treatment accorded Alfred Loisy (d. 1940) indicates the liberality of the scholarship in this work, and much for which Loisy (once condemned as a "liberal") contended finds expression in the critical comments. Thus the article on "Anonymity and Pseudonymity" displays constant awareness of historical circumstances. It is observed that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah are partially pseudonymous, and that James, 2 Peter, and Jude are generally agreed to be pseudonymous. It is to be expected that in a work written out of a rich heritage of theological

debate, a fine legal sensibility should be displayed also in the judgment concerning the morality of pseudonymity. In a court of law evaluations are made in terms of intent. Pseudonymous writing is not *per se* forgery, a term which implies moral judgment determined by evaluation of malicious intention. Pseudonymity, which has as its aim adherence to tradition, is not malicious and therefore not morally culpable. Indeed, heretics, aware of legitimate pseudonymity, attempted to use this device to encourage their own heresies. In such cases we have forgery.

In the article on Freemasonry the writer calls attention to what is often obscured in the treatment of the Masonic Order, namely, its segregationist policy. He also points out that two recent Presidents, Roosevelt and Truman, both espousers of Negro rights, were members of the order, but that President Johnson did not carry through with his membership plans.

Sane historical judgment is also characteristic in the discussion of controversial figures. Tacitus' principle, *sine ira et studio*, is maintained. Luther is generally treated with sympathy, and extreme unscholarly evaluations are dismissed. Alexander VI is likewise treated with objectivity, and some attempt is made to salvage him as a human being out of the caricatures of history. And in the case of Lucretia de Borgia a fine historical sensitivity counteracts the hypocrisy with which notable figures of the past are often described, and her expression of religiosity combined with moral deficiencies is recognized. Such are the realities of history.

Making one's way through many of the articles on theological and dogmatic matters is like slogging through a lumberman's trail after a cloudburst. If he lacks orientation in medieval logic, the reader will soon find himself in semantic clay. But the going is easier on the higher ground of theological open-

¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Teachings, History, Organization, and Activities of the Catholic Church, and on All Institutions, Religions, Philosophies, and Scientific and Cultural Developments Affecting the Catholic Church from its Beginnings to the Present.* Edited by William J. McDonald, James A. Magner, Martin R. P. McGuire, John P. Whalen, and others (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967). 14 volumes and index volume. Price: \$550.00.

endedness in which this work abounds. For example, while the article on abortion does not suggest much likelihood of change over against past pronouncement, the article "Anovulants" leaves the door open for further papal declarations. Similarly the article "Purgatory" in Vol. XI prepares the reader for the spreading concept of purgatory as an instantaneous realization in the realm of mystical category, but page 1037 conflicts with page 1034 on the question of a Scriptural basis.

Discussions of the history of literature and art, as well as of scientific contributions, form a large part of the work. The separate articles if pieced together would compose a sizable volume on the history of literature and art. Appreciation of the broad environmental context in which religion and theology must find expression in our time, including education, politics, economics, and philosophical trends, is one of the many merits that will commend this encyclopedia.

Breadth of scope, however, is not always achieved without some sacrifice of consistency, as soon becomes evident when one consults the index, a necessary key to encyclopedic resources. Biblical concordances and lexicons and Bible dictionaries are discussed, but this reviewer could find no similar treatment of grammars of Biblical languages. The index covers an entire volume, but too often one must be familiar with the general category into which a celebrity's work falls, or he will not find the author or his work. Also the rubric, "not complete in the sense that it provides control of all items of information," warns the user in advance, but one cannot be certain that important comparable items or persons are even discussed somewhere in the body of the text. Thus Jeremy Taylor is cited but not Thomas Talmage. Orazio Marucchi (d. 1931) is mentioned in the index in connection with liturgy, but the subject of his specialty, archaeology (see II, 763), could not be discovered from the index. Lott Cary was the first American Negro missionary to Africa, but he is not cited. Joe (sic!) Barlow is mentioned in the index, but the reference is probably to a Joel Barlow (I, 421); but

Joel Barlow is also mentioned, without reference in the index, in Vol. VII, p. 301.

The encyclopedia has a rather thorough dossier on sectarians and heretics, but I could locate nothing on the early Adamites (2d cent.) or the Adelophagi. Aetius the Arian is perhaps buried somewhere, but the index does not contain his headstone. Pietism is discussed, but Phillip Matthaues Hahn is not mentioned.

Others, especially theological figures of historical importance in the 19th century, either cannot be traced in this set or are discovered with difficulty. [Johann Konrad] Wilhelm Loehe has a special article allotted to him, but Martin Stephan, who also played an important role in the history of Lutheranism in the 19th century, is cited neither in the text nor in the index. Karl-August von Hase is mentioned, but I could not find Claus Harms; Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, but not Karl Friedrich Bahrdt, who popularized the Enlightenment, to the chagrin of Semler; nor Isaak Dorner, who mediated between Schleiermacher and Hegel. And certainly the reaction against pietism cannot be understood without taking Gottfried Menken into account. In brief, the user of this encyclopedia must have recourse to a smaller work, like the one-volume *Lutheran Cyclopaedia* (and this is not chauvinistic propaganda), also for items of interest especially to Roman Catholics, in order to locate the classification under which a person not mentioned in the index or the headings of the encyclopedia may be found, if indeed he is at all discussed.

Encyclopedists depend on their sources for information, and these are not always accurate. Thus, contrary to the indications of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Athos does have some electricity, and monks may be seen resting in the shade listening to their transistor radios. The recent millennial celebration at Great Lavra destroyed forever the isolation which characterized Mount Athos.

In "Church, History of, III" (III, 709) the statement is made that early Lutheranism considered "all Christians . . . priests without distinction." This is not correct. Evidently the writer did not read Article XIV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession or he

would not have satisfied himself with this distortion. The Apology states that "it is our greatest wish to maintain church-polity and the grades in the church," and both it and the Augsburg Confession lay great stress on *rite vocatus*. But more on the question of Lutheran theology later.

W. Bauer had nothing to do with Preuschen's publication in 1910 (see II, 539). Preuschen's publication of 1910 should have been listed separately. In Vol. II, p. 549, Kittel's work is said to have been begun in 1935, and on p. 539, in 1933. The first fascicle actually came out April 1, 1932. In other words, students using this work must be reminded that there is no substitute for checking with primary sources. *Error* is the ultimate *imprimatur*, especially for encyclopedias.

The bibliographies appended to the articles are useful guides for further study. Recognized works on both sides of the fence are generally cited. It is easy to list lacunae, such as Goppelt's work *Typos* under "Typology," but the specialist will know his way to the resources.

Lutherans will naturally ask how their distinctive accents find expression and evaluation in this reservoir of Christian thought. The article on justification unfortunately does not measure up to the excellence achieved in other parts of the encyclopedia. The first part, which presents the Scriptural teaching, is superbly done, and the teaching of Paul and James is accurately sketched. Confusion begins, however, in the sections on Roman Catholic and "Protestant" theology concerning this topic. The reader anticipates that terms will be used in a fairly constant sense, but instead he is catapulted into a semantic morass, and it is soon apparent that what Roman Catholics mean in many contexts by justification is what other Christians call sanctification. More reference to the first part dealing with the Scriptural view would have sharpened the discussion and the concluding remarks on ecumenical implications would have been more meaningful, especially since Lutherans and many other non-Roman Catholic Christians define their position in terms

of the Scriptural terminology. As Harry J. McSorley of Washington, D. C., said recently: "Today [Roman] Catholic scholars realize that Luther's 'faith alone' was not the invention of a rebellious laxist who called himself a reformer. It is a doctrine that corresponds — when taken in Luther's context — to the New Testament."

Often the writer interposes a false antithesis, with disadvantage to the "Protestant" position. For example, in Vol. VIII, p. 88, "Protestant" and Roman Catholic views are discussed in terms of an individualistic-ecclesiological antithesis. In "Protestant" theology the writer says "there is no need either of the church's teaching authority: by Scripture alone can fallen man find the way to justification and salvation" (VIII, 88). No notice is taken of the reason for the stress in non-Roman Catholic discussion on Scripture, nor is the broad ecclesiological stance of Luther in his Large Catechism noted: "Thus until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation, or Christendom, by means of which he fetches us to Christ and which he employs to teach and preach to us the Word, whereby he works and promotes sanctification, causing it [the community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and its fruits which he produces." The appeal of the Book of Concord to a truly catholic tradition in support of the confessors' discussion of justification is not taken into account (see Apology IV, 73). The writer also says that for non-Roman Catholics "external rites can at most be helpful in arousing faith and trust in Christ, the faith that alone justifies." This is fantastic in view of Luther's encomium on Baptism in the Large Catechism.

The prejudiced view of the writer is not only apparent from his use of the term "error" when speaking of non-Roman Catholic deviations, while reserving the more charitable term "apparent overemphasis" in the case of Roman theology, but also in his persistence in evaluating Lutheran theology in terms of sophisticated analysis of unequal elements.

One of the writer's charges against Lu-

theranism is that it "logically concludes to a mere non-imputation, not a real remission, of sin" (VIII, 87).² Lutherans, however, are concerned with the meaning of justification as God's action in acquitting the sinner before Himself. By justification through faith Lutherans mean the acquittal and acceptance of the sinner by God through His own gracious action in Christ Jesus, revealed in the promises of Scripture. An unfair antithesis is used by the writer to contrast the non-Roman Catholic doctrine as based "on an experience of saving faith" and the Roman doctrine on "faith in the revealed doctrine" and "the word of Christ." (VIII, 92)

The Lutheran view is not mere "psychological dialectic" (VIII, 91). The Apology of the Augsburg Confession expressly says that "experience teaches forcibly enough that when we truly feel the judgment and wrath of God, or become afflicted, our works and worship cannot set the heart at rest." It is against dependence on psychological assurance that the Book of Concord continually accents the importance of reliance on the objective reality of God's work in Christ. It is not faith in my faith but faith as the gift of the Holy Spirit which finds consolation in the promises. Nor is the Christian's remission of sins to be understood in terms of a nominal construct. According to the Book of Concord the justified Christian does not remain ontologically a sinner but a redeemed person who must face the hard reality of coping with sin. "The faith of which we speak exists in repentance, i. e., it is conceived in the terrors of conscience, which feels the wrath of God against our sins, and seeks the remission of sins, and to be freed from sin. . . . Wherefore it cannot exist in those who live according to the flesh, who are delighted by their own lusts and obey them. . . . The faith which receives remission of sins in a

² A similar ontological concern penetrates the exegesis of Luke 1:28. Mary was said to *be* full of grace, whereas the correct interpretation, espoused also by Roman Catholic exegetes, affirms that Mary is the recipient of God's gracious favor. John 1:14, said of Christ, expresses what scholastic exegesis erroneously attributed to Luke 1:28.

heart terrified and fleeing from sin does not remain in those who obey their desires, neither does it coexist with mortal sin" (Apology III, 21—23). Nor is the Christian dependent here on his own resources, for he is in fact, and not merely in theory, a new being. "Because, indeed, faith brings the Holy Ghost, and produces in hearts a new life, it is necessary that it should produce spiritual movements in hearts." Similarly in the Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, III, 20: "When man is justified through faith (which the Holy Ghost alone works), this is truly a regeneration, because from a child of wrath he becomes a child of God, and thus is transferred from death to life." The Roman Catholic view is actually nominalistic, for experience belies the ontology which is presupposed, whereas in the Lutheran approach the ontological factor, sonship, is not put into question by inherent concupiscence. The writer's own evaluation of Pauline theology actually endorses the position of the Lutheran Confessions: "Justification must precede any consideration of how the justified person lives out his life, or his salvation, in union with the risen Lord until its consummation in bodily resurrection. Such justification is based exclusively on God's fidelity to His promises; it is purely gratuitous, for man cannot gain it by his own works" (VIII, 79). Again: "Paul's thought is sharpened by controversy, and to combat their teaching he must speak primarily of the first moment of transition when the sinner becomes the just man . . ." (ibid.). Compare this with Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, III, 9 and 24.

Ultimately the controversy on justification derives from variety of approach. Many Roman Catholic theologians have conceived of justification primarily in terms of maintaining a right relationship with God. In Lutheran thought the sinner is *really* forgiven, he is really justified. Yet, a real understanding of the flesh-spirit antithesis is appreciated. Much Roman Catholic writing does not accent the reality of a restored relationship, and it introduces into the question of restoration to sonship with God the quantitative element of production within that relationship. In

Lutheranism the end is as the beginning. Sonship now is quantitatively no different from sonship in the beatific vision. Qualitatively there is a distinction. The son now does not realize the full benefits of sonship, namely, the triumph over concupiscence. The opposition of realism and nominalism is a sophism.

Some of the obscurity in evaluation of Reformation theology might have been removed by more careful distinction between Reformed and Lutheran theology. Too often the two are linked together, but Lutheran theologians prefer to stress the catholicity in their position and therefore do not welcome the bland identification with "Protestants." Moreover, in the interests of ecumenical understanding and not only accuracy of scholarship, denominational editors of works of this type might pay more attention to the principle of collegiality and subject articles dealing with controversial theological issues to the critique of eminent scholars who know thoroughly the denominational ground being covered. Better yet, include parallel articles by scholars representing the denominational viewpoints that are discussed. These would be in addition to the invitation articles — of which there are many in this set — on subjects of special denominational interest. For example,

Professor Piepkorn, of Concordia Seminary, writes on the Augsburg Confession in Vol. I; he could also have shared in the discussion of "Justification in Protestant Theology," which is section 3 of the entry "Justification." Ecumenical monologs under one printed roof we have had for a long time, but the technique of "dialog" regrettably has not moved into works of this type. If in a decade or two, why not now?

Such negative criticisms as are included in this brief study should, however, not be construed as a depreciation of gratitude for the incomparable collection of data here gathered. Much of the material in these volumes could only be located by the student or pastor in French and German publications, and with great output of energy. Nor is this a work only for Roman Catholics. Pastors who have stereotyped impressions of Roman theology had better check with this encyclopedia before making catechetical pronouncements on Roman "heresy." The Rome of the older textbooks is gone. This is not to say that the Reformation has superseded it, but fresh evaluations are necessary, and this work offers the basis for intelligent appraisal. Every parish library ought to have this set on its shelves. Scholars will require no further recommendation.