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EDITORIAL

THE ORGAN — BANE OR BLESSING?

A decade or two ago we could hardly have referred to an "organ tradition" in our MB constituency. It is perhaps not very meaningful to speak of one even now, since the use of organs in our churches is still a relatively new phenomenon, and only about half of the churches are using them. This state of affairs seems all the more strange when we consider that organs have been the accepted instruments in churches for centuries.

Why the long period of hesitation in using organs in our MB churches? No doubt the main consideration today is the financial outlay involved. But a more basic reason would be that many of our members see little purpose or advantage in having an organ (an electronic one, that is — a pipe organ is out of the question for many). These people argue that the voice is the best instrument with which to praise God, and that when we sing fervently in four-part harmony we are praising God in the best way possible. It follows naturally from this line of reasoning that both pianos and organs are rather superfluous in our church services, and that their use tends to cater to worldly tastes as well as a striving after artistic rather than spiritual effects.

Others are in favour of using organs in our churches, but believe that it would be poor stewardship to invest money in an expensive pipe organ. There is also a fear that pipe organs would overwhelm the singing of the congregation, and that we would soon lose our part-singing tradition and would be tempted just to listen to the organ. With respect to good stewardship in musical matters — there are those who maintain that the electronic organs are already an unnecessary luxury in a church, since a good upright piano costs only a tenth as much and is just as effective an instrument (as they see it).

The use of organs in our churches is questioned then because of the financial outlay involved and because of the fear that the organ may in the end prove to be more detrimental than helpful to congregational or choral singing.

How then explain the presence of organs in many of our sanctuaries? Obviously there must be many church members who favour the use of organs (electronic ones at least) in our churches. This group is convinced that organs rightly played can contribute much to our services and advance the cause of Christian music in our areas. This group believes that the "organ tradition" has much to offer our churches. One might well ask how we arrived at this

difference of opinion about the use of the organ in our churches as represented by the divergent views of the above groups.

I would submit that the desire felt by many for having organs in our churches (and the use of a pipe organ represents a kind of ideal) is a natural result of the steady increase and growth in musical knowledge in our constituency in the past several decades. Let me sketch this pattern of growth briefly.

As far as I know, few or none of our MB churches used organs or pianos in Russia. There was a choral tradition based on the "Ziffern" system which included some elementary training for conductors and singers at Saengerfeste and similar occasions. The main instruments used were guitars and violins, as well as some brasses. The congregations sang in four-part harmony, and the main repertoire consisted of the music of the "Liederperlen" and other collections such as the "Dreiband" (published without notes). Little emphasis seems to have been placed on folk music amongst the Mennonites, and this tradition was slowly being lost. The folk singing of the Russian peasants near Mennonite communities was highly respected and enjoyed for its innocent "secular" pleasure.

This pattern of music-making gradually changed after the emigration to Canada and the USA. The period of isolation came to a close and we began to participate more and more in the social, economic, religious and cultural life of social order around us. We gradually established contact with the mainstream of music-making as well. Congregations continued to sing in four parts, but were provided with books that had notes (though many people couldn't read notes) and choirs began to use music printed in modern notation. Soon pianos were introduced into private homes and into all the churches (after the depression). Various members of the family began taking music lessons. Opportunities to make music on a more advanced level existed everywhere — in the high schools, Bible schools, local community or oratorio choirs, as well as in bands and orchestras.

In the course of time a great many of our church members received advanced training in music and are themselves skilled amateur or professional musicians, actively engaged in teaching or making music. We have active music-making in our high schools, Bible schools and colleges. The repertoire chosen is selected from the entire heritage of the music of the church. There is also an intimate acquaintance with the standard secular repertoire.

Needless to say, through such media as TV, radio, recordings and live concerts the world of music has become generally accessible to all our church members. The general increase in musical knowledge and experience is an exact parallel to the educational renaissance that has been sweeping across our constituency the past several decades. It is not surprising to find great diversity in musical tastes or levels of musical understanding among the various members of a typical congregation. It is this difference in

musical background and training that largely accounts for the fact that some people feel they "must" have a good organ in church while others long for the good old days when music was simple and everyone sang lustily without any accompaniment.

I personally feel that a good organ, well-played, can contribute a great deal to the spiritual effectiveness of church music. If churches want to get the most out of the electronic organs they are presently using they ought to do their best to see that their organists get all the professional training they can. Many negative impressions which people have of organs in a church are the direct result of poor or ineffective use of the instrument by an inexperienced player.

There is a good deal more involved in playing the organ than in merely transferring one's piano technique to the organ. And what a difference there is between the artificial sound of an electronic instrument and the natural sound of the pipe organ! What many church members and music committees do not realize is that a smaller pipe organ can be purchased in stages and a very effective "basic" rank of pipes costs no more than about \$8,000 to \$10,000. Furthermore, pipe organs easily outlast the best electronics and are less expensive to keep in good repair.

An organ should be used for its strong points. There is no better instrument for supporting and enhancing congregational singing. A good organist will not drown out the congregational singing. What a joy to hear a pipe organ effectively used to accompany the choir or a soloist!

There is also something to be said for singing one of the great hymns in unison occasionally, or at least a stanza now and then, supported by the swelling chords of the organ. We have lost the taste for good melodies and good unison singing by always singing in parts. As long as we encourage part — singing and continue to have the majority of our young people sing in the church choirs the tradition of part singing will not be lost to us.

There is a goodly heritage embodied in the "organ tradition" which is ours to explore and to acquire. We may select from this tradition that which seems to suit our particular needs and emphases best, just as we do in the realm of hymnody. But we shall have to work hard at it and be prepared to pay for what is valuable.

Why should congregations spend so much money on aesthetics intended for the eye and not on those to impress the ear? Are not both needed to gain a totally satisfying worship experience? If one must save in building new sanctuaries, why cannot a few rooms be sacrificed from the Christian Education wing? Let us not forget that a good organ will be heard for at least one third of the total time spent in worship and other services in the sanctuary!

Peter Klassen

ARTICLES

MISSIONS AND ESCHATOLOGY PRIOR TO THE 'GREAT CENTURY'

In previous articles we have tried to show that missions and eschatology are closely related in the teachings of both Old and New Testament. We also pointed out that the church's view of the End has always affected her missionary fervor and evangelistic activity. In our last article, we tried to illustrate the close connection between eschatology and missions in the millennium and a half from Apostolic times up to, and including, the Reformation. In this article we continue to trace this relationship in post-Reformation times up to the 19th century, which Latourette has called "The Great Century" of Christian missions. In the 19th century the lines of eschatological thinking become somewhat more clearly marked out; in the period which we are considering at the moment, this is not the case.

I. Eschatological Impulses in Mission Efforts Prior to 1792.

During the great era of Roman Catholic expansion to the Eastern and Western world, Protestantism became well established in Europe and began to spread to the American continent. Here it led to the creation of a "Protestant nation" that was to play a key role in world missions. Despite the enervating effects of rationalism on Protestantism during this period, there were rays of hope on the horizon, for the evangelical revivals began to stir the Protestant churches in Germany, Britain, Scandinavia and America, to new mission activity. The awakening of the missionary impulse came on the crest of the waves of revival, although it should be added that there were numerous other factors contributing to the revival of interest in missions. This is not the place to discuss such topics; we are, at the moment, interested primarily in the relationship between missions and eschatology, in the period leading up to William Carey and the modern missionary era.

Although the enthusiasm for missions in the post-Reformation days is to be found primarily in the more pietistic circles, it was not limited to them. There were men who might be called rationalists who were also interested in missions. The philosopher Leibniz, for example, had a keen interest in missions. Not that he believed that the heathen were lost, but he was interested in the establishment of a kind of Kingdom of God, a realm of moral and spiritual perfection. Eschatological, indeed! But it is to evangelical Christianity that we must look if we want to feel the impulses that led to the modern era of missions.

A. **Seventeenth Century Evangelicalism.** There were different currents in the evangelical traditions of the 17th century, with differing eschatological emphases. These were usually reflected in the missionary beginnings during this period. We might just take "a look around" to illustrate this. In Holland, eschatological expectations played no small part in the development of the missionary idea in the 17th century. (Holland was to play a very important role in Protestant missions because it stood in the van as an exploring and trading country in the Protestant world). Here the thought was taking root that the conversion of the Gentiles must precede the conversion of the Jews, which then, in its turn, will be the sign of the end of all things. "In this way missions became a constituent factor in the realization of God's total plan for the world; a relation becomes visible between the going out to the ends of the earth and the coming of the end of the times."¹ Men began to speak of a preparation, or even an acceleration, of the Second Coming by missionary activity.

On the other side of the Atlantic, American Protestants in the early part of the 17th century developed some interest in the conversion of the Red Indian. Outstanding in this field was the pioneer John Eliot (1604 - 1690). Of him it is said that he believed the conversion of the Indians to be the sign of the gradual approach of the "perfect day."

In German Pietism, where the first Protestant foreign missions attempt was cradled, the connection between missions and eschatology is also to be found. We shall say more of this later; suffice it here to say that in Pietism it was believed that the time for missions was limited and that they must seek to save as many souls as possible before the Day came. In the words of Bavinck, "This idea was strongly emphasized because it was closely connected with the anticipation of Christ's immediate return. Many were deeply concerned with eschatology. Time is running out. It is too late to plant deep roots; the question is how to win as many souls for the Lamb as possible, throughout the entire world."² This, of course, does not mean that eschatology was the only, or even the dominating motive for missions, but it was a strong motive.

By contrast, the English Methodists, who showed a great interest in missions even though they did not develop foreign mission agencies until some other denominations had done so, were not inspired by the imminence of the End. There was much 'hell-fire' preaching in this movement, but eschatology was overshadowed by soteriology. They held more to the view that the Kingdom should be ushered in gradually. Van Der Berg says "If their eschatology played any part at all, it performed rather the function of a comforting background than a strong stimulus. They saw the Kingdom approach along the road of the conversion of individual souls, and they believed that God himself would find the ways and show the times of the conversion of the heathen."³

B. The Eighteenth Century Awakening. In the English-speaking world of the 18th century—that is, in the more evangelical strains—it was generally held that prior to the Coming of Christ, his spiritual government would be established over the whole world. It was what today would be known as a post-millennial view of the Kingdom. This was the view of Whitfield and of many of the English Dissenters, as well as that of some of the Anglicans of the more evangelical persuasion. The view was greatly popularized by the American, Jonathan Edwards. The view had been derived out of a certain interpretation of prophecy; also, the events of the day seemed to encourage this kind of thinking. The domination of Roman Catholic powers was waning; Islam seemed to be tottering; and the French Revolution also contributed to optimistic thinking. The knowledge of God was believed to be spreading over the whole earth as Protestant nations gained control of new lands all over the world; there was an air of expectancy. The missionary ideal was lifted up by these waves of fervent expectations, and the times of resigned and passive waiting gave way to renewed missionary vigor. What Isaac Watts had sung prophetically at the beginning of the century, 1719, seemed to be coming true, "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun." In such an atmosphere the Carey Epoch was born.

II. The Spreading Flame of Missionary Fervor after 1792.

With William Carey's famous "Enquiry", and his great Kettering address, in 1792, the beginning of a new chapter in missions history was marked. Following the example of the Baptists, one mission society after another sprang up, and, as we shall see, there was almost in every instance an eschatological element that stimulated such vigor.

A. The Baptists. Some eight years before Kettering, one of the leading spirits in Baptist circles had preached a prophetic message in which he had remarked: By these prophecies the Christian Church is encouraged to look for great things—to look for a time when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But there were other views, too, and Carey had to refute the idea that the time of the heathen had not yet come simply because certain prophecies had not yet been fulfilled. The expectation of "far-off" things was more than once a comforting substitute for missionary action. On the whole, however, eschatology in English Baptist circles worked in favour of the missionary awakening. It prepared the ground for a new enthusiasm which was to spread like a contagion, and was to grip men and women in Britain everywhere. Many saw in this awakened missionary zeal the sign of the dawn of the Millennium, others thought of it as a way of hurrying on the Lord's Return.

B. The Paedobaptists. Following closely on the heels of the Baptist Society was the London Missionary Society, organized in

1795, representing different denominations among the Paedobaptists. In these circles, too, eschatology played an important part in increasing mission enthusiasm. Without a recognition of the awakening of the eschatological interest it is impossible to explain the amazing missionary enthusiasm that gripped the British churches at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. Van Den Berg says: "In LMS circles the reserve which we find with Carey and other missionary leaders with regard to the interpretations of prophecy gave place sometimes to an almost naive enthusiasm." Of course it must not be overlooked that many were motivated simply by the command of Christ which they suddenly saw to be binding on all Christians.

C. Evangelical Anglicans. Among Anglican circles there was a more restrained eschatology at this time, but among the leading men who led in the forming of the Church Missionary Society, 1799, there were those who had very pronounced eschatological views. Charles Simeon, the spiritual father of many leading ministers and chaplains of the Church of England during this period, held that the conversion of the gentiles would lead to the conversion of the Jews, who would then in turn evangelize the gentiles. This also explains his great interest in Jewish work—an interest which Zinzendorf, a few decades earlier, had already expressed. They derived this view from their interpretation of Rom. 11:25, 26. Some of the famous chaplains of the East India Company held similar views. Claudius Buchanan and David Brown of India believed that the conversion of the gentiles was the beginning of the fulfillment of the great purposes of God in the end times. Even Henry Martyn, whose many trials tempered his optimism, shared in such expectations.

D. The American Board. In the formation of the first American board for foreign missions, 1810-12, eschatological considerations played no small part. It appears as if the beginnings of North American missions were essentially based on an apocalyptically oriented theology. Samuel Hopkins' treatment on the Millennium had considerable influence on the Haystack Prayermeeting, in 1808, in that it brought home to Mills and his followers the extreme urgency of missions. It might be added that the thought of the eternal damnation of the heathen without the Gospel was a grave concern of this pioneering group of seminarians. They apparently could not find rest when millions were perishing without Christ, while they kept the Gospel to themselves. So again we have eschatological expectations playing into missionary activity.

However differently the details of eschatology were understood in evangelical circles in the 18th century—that missions either announced, prepared, or hastened the day of his coming—the missionary awakening of the turn of the century was closely related to eschatological expectations.

THE LIVING ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST THROUGH FAITH

(A comparison and contrast of what German orthodoxy of the seventeenth century said concerning this encounter, with what Brunner says about it in the twentieth century.)

Nothing is more central to the believer's redemption than union and communion with Jesus Christ. Any Christian theology which fails to take account of this Biblical teaching is defective not only in its presentation of theology, but also in its whole conception of the Christian life. Union with Christ underlies the whole doctrine of salvation. Paul frequently sums it up in the term — "in Christ". It is in Christ that man is made a new creature. "We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). In that relationship the believer partakes of the merits of Christ. In that relationship he lives the Christian life. "I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). The Christian life cannot be that of cold assent. In the words of John Murray, "It must have the passion and warmth of love and communion because communion with God is the crown and apex of true Religion."¹

Did the seventeenth century German theologians teach and emphasize this vital fellowship and union with Christ, or were they satisfied with a creedal faith, a bare assent to Biblical doctrine without the transforming fellowship with the living Christ? Emil Brunner regards this period of orthodoxy as a period which lost the secret of the Reformation, and concerned itself basically with objective doctrines as the actual object of faith.²

While one is appreciative of Brunner's concern for a living faith and a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, his reconstruction of the period of orthodoxy is questionable his severe criticism indicates a certain weakness in his own position, as will become apparent.

In our next issue of **The Voice** we hope to trace the relationship between missions and eschatology through the 'Great Century' of missions and draw forth some practical inferences for missions and eschatology in our day.

1. J. Van Den Berg, **Constrained by Jesus' Love**, 1956, p. 20.

2. J. H. Bavinck, **An Introduction to the Science of Missions**, 1960, p. 95

3. J. Van Den Berg, **op. cit.**, p. 103.

4. **Ibid.**, p. 161.

D. Ewert

I. Union with Christ as Viewed by the German Theologians.

Faith and Union with Christ

The concept of faith is of major significance in any discussion of union with Christ. In particular, the question to ask the German theologians of our period is whether Christian faith unites the believer in intimate, personal and spiritual union with the living Christ.

Martin Chemnitz, in his massive examination of Roman Catholic dogma, distinguishes the Lutheran concept of faith from the Roman Catholic — which he describes as historical knowledge and mere assent.³ The Biblical concept of faith he insists requires of man "to apprehend Christ unto righteousness and salvation" (p. 519). Faith has respect to the end of Scripture, which is Christ in his office as mediator (p. 520). Such a faith is not an "idle faith" but a true and living one which works by love. "However the life which faith brings to the believer it does not accept from love, but from Christ whom it embraces, who is our life and salvation" (p. 537). The firmest argument against doubt Chemnitz sees in the presence and reality of the Holy Spirit given to the believer through faith. Every believer has received the pledge of the Spirit and thereby entered into a vital union with Christ.

Similar emphases abound in his **Enchiridion**. Faith is related to the prior illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, and to the culminating personal relationship to Jesus Christ. While faith includes an acceptance of the doctrines of Scripture, its object is Jesus Christ the mediator.⁴ Faith is defined in words as, "Es ist das Band, dadurch Christus in uns wohnet (Eph. 3) und wir in ihm gefunden werden (Phil. 3)" (p. 86). Unless the natural mind, heart and will of man is illuminated by the Holy Spirit he cannot come to the right faith (p. 89). These definitions of faith which emphasize the intimate relationship of the believer to his Lord are confirmed in chapters dealing with other subjects such as the prayer life of the believer. It is pregnant with expressions suggesting a warm and intimate fellowship of the believer with Christ.

Johann Gerhard, who was called to the theological faculty at Jena in 1616, was the principal spokesman for the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century.⁵ His literary activity includes a number of works which centre on the close relationship of the believer to Christ. A representative and beautiful description of that union is the following paragraph from his **Heilige Betrachtungen**.

Selig ist die Seele, welche durch das Band dieser geistlichen Vermählung mit Christo verbunden ist: sicher und getrost eignet sie sich alle die Wohltaten Christi zu, wie auch sonst in der Ehe das Weib die Ehre von dem Manne hat. Solcher seligen und geistlichen Vermählung aber werden wir allein durch den Glauben teilhaftig, wie geschrieben steht: Im Glauben will ich mich mit dir verloben. Der

*Glaube pflöpft uns Reben in Christum, als den geistlichen Weinstock ein, daß wir Leben und Kraft aus ihm ziehen: und gleich wie die welche in die Ehe leben, nicht zwei sind, sondern ein Fleisch, also werden auch die welche durch den Glauben den Herrn anhangen, Ein Geist mit ihm; denn durch den Glauben wohnt Christus in unseren Herzen.*⁶

In these words we have a superb example indicating that faith was not related exclusively to doctrine as its object. For Gerhard faith was unquestionably an encounter experience with the living Christ. This is not to say that faith was limited to an encounter with Christ. In his major theological work, faith includes also an acceptance of the truthfulness of the Word of God through God's grace and the illumination of the Spirit – but that faith is not without a trust in the Saviour.⁷ Gerhard insists that without sure knowledge about Christ one cannot have confidence in him; one must know in whom one believes (p. 264).

Similarly Hutter describes faith as more inclusive than a historical knowledge of Christ; it is a trust in Christ, the Redeemer.⁸ Hunnius in his **Glaubenslehre** is very explicit in indicating the effects of faith; faith, as **fiducia**, reconciles man to God and assures him through the indwelling Holy Spirit that he is a child of God.⁹ Faith makes the believer alive to God; henceforth he lives in the power of Christ. Of particular importance to Hunnius is the passage in Romans six which reminds the Christian of his death to sin and his new life in union with Jesus Christ (p. 231).

The dynamic of the Christian life

The orthodox theologians regard the indwelling Christ as the new dynamic of the Christian's life. Good works are impossible without that union forged by the Holy Spirit. Chemnitz discusses Romans chapter six with pragmatic interests in mind; union with Christ in his death and resurrection results in a useful and practical Christian life.¹⁰ The regenerate bring forth fruit because they have been grafted into Christ, and because they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (p. 611). Hutter is equally emphatic on this point — “Such good works are not performed in our own natural powers, but only when a person is reconciled to God through faith and renewed by the Holy Ghost, or as Paul says, new created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (p. 124). Gerhard says that the Holy Spirit is not only a teacher of good works in the Word of God, but through his renewal of the inward man and through illumination of the Holy Spirit, he enables man to perform them.¹¹ Union with Christ causes the believer to desire to do the will of the Father.¹² If a person is not being changed and renewed, expressing that renewal in his daily walk of life, then the Christian dynamic is missing — he is not in Christ (p. 161). In his **Übung der Gottseligkeit** the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Christ is basic to the whole promotion of the holy life of the believer.¹³

The nature of the believer's union with Christ

Gerhard describes the believer's union with Christ as a love relationship conceived in language very similar to Brunner's agape relationship. The believer responds to the Divine love which has come to him in grace.¹⁴ This love shed into our hearts by God changes and transforms; it creates joy and peace. Such a union is real, in the here and now (p. 56). For Gerhard union with Christ is no abstract theory about which man may speculate; it is to be a real experience bringing the believer into an interpersonal relationship with his redeemer.

The **Glaubenslehre** of Hunnius, which reads like some of the works of Billy Graham, in that it is studded with numerous Bible references, speaks of being grafted into Jesus Christ.¹⁵ This union is a spiritual union or bond (p. 266). It is a love relationship which completely occupies the mind and heart of the believer.

Gleich also hanget ein christlich Herz an seinem Heiland mit stetigen Vertrauen und Hoffnung, schleußt ihn in sich, geht mit ihm schlafen, steht mit ihm auf und nimmt zu ihm in allen widerwärtigen Zufall seine Zuflucht und verknüpft sich ihm mit allen seinen Gedanken (pp. 266-267).

Beyond this Hunnius describes the mystical relationship in images set forth in Scripture, such as: we are God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16); we have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27); we are his bride (Eph. 5:25); we are branches of the vine (John 15:5); we are members of his body (1 Cor. 12:12). Union with Christ is also coincident with the believer's union in the body of Christ with his fellow brethren.

It is evident, therefore, that in the mind of the orthodox theologians a zealot preoccupation with Biblical theology and precise formulations of doctrine was not at all incongruous with a keen interest in redemptive, intimate, loving and personal relationships with Jesus Christ. Everyone of the theologians examined insists that the whole movement of faith terminates in the living person of Jesus Christ. Union with him is seen as union with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. That union provides the new dynamic for a fruitful Christian life. That union changes and transforms the believer into a new creature. Faith, as the instrumental means, involves knowledge, involves an acceptance of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures; but it is incomplete without trust in the living Lord. It is the latter aspect of faith which receives constant emphasis in the writings examined.

II. Emil Brunner and Union With Christ

In his book, **The Divine-Human Encounter**, Brunner states that the single theme of the Biblical proclamation is the relation between God and man.¹⁶ That relation is characterized as a personal encounter, an event or an act. Faith has reference only to an

encounter with Christ. Brunner is concerned to go beyond Orthodoxy and Pietism in his understanding of faith (p. 40).

Faith as an encounter and revelatory experience

Brunner describes the Biblical view of man's proper relationship to Christ as a radical Lordship and fellowship (p. 55). Lordship means man's decisive acknowledgement of God as Lord by a free act of submission. Fellowship is co-ordinate with decisive Lordship; God communicates himself to man in love, and man responds to God in love (p. 61). Faith (*pistis*) is the response of the whole person to receive this self-giving God; it is an obedience-in-trust (**Vertrauensgehorsam**) closely related to the **agape concept** (p. 69). Faith is entering into a "personal correspondence"; such personal fellowship is identical with truth (p. 75).

Such faith is to be distinguished from thinking. In thinking the objective-subjective antithesis holds; one may have knowledge of "something", which is at one's disposal; such knowledge need not change or transform; it may still leave the thinker solitary. Faith is radically different. In faith God apprehends the believer; He is Lord! In faith the believer is revolutionized in his life and being; Faith never leaves the believer solitary — God has broken into his world and established a personal relationship (p. 89). He who has faith dies with Christ and rises to newness of life. The old man is actually dead and the new man actually lives. (p. 101).

But how can one enter into such a relationship with God without knowing something about him? Brunner agrees that faith must be related to doctrine. Man can respond to the self-giving God only in virtue of knowing some Biblical doctrine (p. 106). But doctrine forms only a framework — although an important framework; without the frame the content cannot be grasped (p. 110). Brunner arrives at a orthodox position on this point when he writes, "One cannot enter into fellowship with Him, we cannot give ourselves to Him in fruitful obedience, otherwise than by believing 'what' He says to us" (p. 113). The purpose of Biblical doctrine is to lead us to the true faith — faith simply expressed as trust in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer; such trust is entering into a fellowship with the Lord who is always present (p. 139).

The nature of our union with Christ

The union with Christ by faith and through the Holy Spirit is an implantation into Christ. It consists of being in the love of Christ. It means participation in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That union is further characterized in these words:

What is of moment here is not union but fellowship. Subject and object may become one in a highest act of knowledge. The mystical experience of identification lies in the direction of knowledge, but it does not lie in the direction of faith. Faith should eventuate not in union, but in fellowship. Fellowship is not, as abstract thinking always supposes, a form of union as yet unfulfilled. Fellowship is

much more than that — indeed, something quite different from — union. Union, in the last analysis, is being alone and living for oneself, but fellowship is being with another and living for him. The highest expression of fellowship in faith therefore means: to live for the Lord, to be instrument, to be servant — and yet at the same time to be child and son (pp. 152 - 153).

In his **Dogmatics** Brunner sets off his own teaching of immediacy in the personal relationship with Christ from mysticism from another point of view. The rationalist and the mystic, he argues, wish for an immediacy which is not dependant on the historical. The Christian on the other hand, can proceed to the present immediate relationship to Christ only on the basis of the historical — "The Holy Spirit is immediacy, pure presence, pure personal fellowship, but he is immediacy on the basis of the revelation in the historical mediator — and thus on the basis of mediacy."¹⁷ Brunner appeals to Galatians 2:20, where Paul sets the basis of his personal union with Christ on the mediating work of Christ, on faith in the Son of God "who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here is found the paradoxical unity of mystical immediacy and the historical faith in the mediator.

Basic to Brunner's objection to the orthodox view of faith is his objection to the orthodox view of Scripture. From the Reformation times there was a failure to distinguish between God's Word (Christ) and doctrine. He maintains that the Reformation legalistically misunderstood the Bible as God's Word in the sense that it was something disposable; it maintained the doctrine of the Divine infallibility of Scriptural texts, a view which Brunner calls a "theological docetism."¹⁸ It is this view, he feels, which led to a false view of faith. A system of doctrine, based upon a false view of revelation was equated with the Word of God (p. 173).

III. Concluding Critique

It has become apparent that both Brunner and the orthodox theologians were preoccupied with the concern that men enter into a vital fellowship with the living Lord. To them faith was always mean essentially trust. No orthodox theologians denied that saving faith comprehended, and resulted in, a personal contemporary relationship with Christ. The dogmaticians took pains to distinguish the fiducial faith from a historical or creedal faith. This emphasis on a living relationship to Christ was not relegated merely to a theological discussion in "Union with Christ", as a part of Christian theology to be believed, but it undergirded the whole structure of the **ordo salutis**. The faith which justified man before God was the faith which united him to Christ, transforming and changing the whole man into the image of Christ. The good works in which the Christian engaged were the result of the new dynamic of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These emphases abound

in the works examined. The charge that the seventeenth century theologians were not interested in the Divine-human encounter is refuted not only by the specifically theological treatises, but also by the more popular works written by these men, works which underscore true Biblical pietism. The **Sacred Meditations** is a classic example; it is a work thoroughly charged with the concern that men might know the living Christ in their daily lives. This work was written by the leading exponent of German orthodoxy in the seventeenth century.

To Brunner must go the credit that he draws the attention of the church to that which must remain central in Christian theology — the Divine-human encounter. He stands in the tradition of Søren Kierkegaard, who in his day and in his church sought to arouse a dead church. But for all that, the Lutheran theologians would not be in basic disagreement with Brunner in his emphasis on personal Lordship and personal fellowship.

It has also become apparent that Brunner, as well as the theologians, recognizes the need of doctrine, as a precondition for a faith relationship to Jesus Christ. Brunner is no friend of mysticism. He insists that personal encounter, trust and obedience is linked with something objective — "...this personal happening is indissolubly linked with conceptual content, with truth in the general sense of the word, truth as doctrine, knowledge as perception of facts" (p. 112). Doctrine has an instrumental connection to the trust relationship. Without this frame of doctrine one is unable to get at the picture, at the content. The orthodox German theologians would have no quarrel in this emphasis on the need of doctrine.

A False Antithesis

Where then does the disagreement between Brunner and the earlier theologians lie? It lies precisely in the false antithesis which Brunner sets up between the doctrine of Scripture held by the theologians and fiducial faith. A view which regards Scripture as the revealed Word of God, inspired by God and infallible, is considered by Brunner to be incompatible with a faith in the present living Lord. Faith in "something" is incompatible with faith as trust and relationship.

The orthodox theologians did not set up such an antithesis. They did not place revelation in Jesus Christ over against revelation in the Scriptures. Neither is such an antithesis expressed in the Scriptures or in the attitude of Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 11:1, faith is conceived as faith in "something", including "that the world was created by the Word of God." In the Bible faith is related to doctrines and facts of history; it is more than subjective; it is more than relationship. To believe that Christ died for our sins according to Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4) is not in antithesis to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:15), "The saying is sure (pistos) and worthy of full acceptance,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Trust in the truthfulness of Scripture in its accounts and propositional statements does not preclude a personal encounter with our Lord. On the contrary, personal trust and a love relationship to Jesus Christ is based upon an acknowledgement of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures.

Revelation in Person and Word

There is nothing in the words of our Lord to suggest a disparity between a revelation of his person and the written Word. His teachings and proclamations were closely associated with the Old Testament. His Words and the Words of the Old Testament were reliable. He directed the Jews to study Moses because he testified of him (John 6:39). Moses could testify to him because his writings were authoritative. For Christ the Old Testament was an unimpeachable authority. The Scriptures were the Word of God. When the Pharisees came to Jesus with a question of divorce, he replied, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said..." (Math. 19:4-5). The quotation which follows is a quotation of the Old Testament; but it is not directly ascribed to God in the Genesis account. The only reasonable inference is that Jesus regarded Scripture itself as the Word of God. In the Bible there is therefore, a complete compatibility between faith in the assertions of Scriptures and faith in the person of Christ; between revelation in the Scriptures and revelation in the Son of God. This harmony is well summed up by Schrottenboer:

The Bible presents an inner harmony between faith as the personal commitment of the creature to his God and the acceptance of the truth which this God has caused to be inscripturated in the Bible. Saving faith is inseparable from the humble recognition of the full reliability of the eternal truths revealed in the Bible.¹⁹

It is precisely at this point that submission to the Lordship of Christ menat for the orthodox theologian submission to the Word of God, as found in the Scriptures. Brunner's view of Scripture is not Christ's or Paul's view of Scripture. For Brunner genuine Bible faith cannot be separated from Biblical criticism.²⁰ The Bible must be regarded as a historical book containing errors. He sees in the Bible, for example in 2 Tim. 3:16, signs of the unfortunate identification of revealed doctrine and the Bible.²¹ The seventeenth century theologians would regard such freedom with the Scriptures as rebellion against God and a failure to submit completely to the Lordship of the living Christ. While appreciating much of what Brunner says about the Divine-human encounter, they would see that encounter threatened by Brunner's critical view of Scripture.

V. Adrian

(For Notes and References see inside back cover)

A SERMON

VORBILDICHE OPFERWILLIGKEIT IM BAU DES REICHES GOTTES.

Text: 1. Chron. 29, 6-22.

Einleitung. Der Bau des Tempels war die größte gemeinsame Arbeit des Alttestamentlichen Bundesvolkes. Aktive Mitarbeit an diesem Werk war die besondere Freude der Knechte des Herrn (vgl. Ps. 102, 15). Die Vernachlässigung dieses Baus war andererseits die besondere Bürde der Propheten (vgl. Haggai 2, 1-4).

Der Bau des geistlichen Tempels ist die größte gemeinsame Aufgabe des Neutestamentlichen Bundesvolkes. Es tut in unsern Tagen jedoch not darauf hinzuweisen, daß "Kirchbau" nicht notwendigerweise "Tempelbau" ist. Ersteres ist nur Mittel zum Zweck, und kann unter Umständen sogar ein großes Hindernis sein im Bau des geistlichen Tempels. Für uns bedeutet Tempelbau ein Bauen der Gemeinde, ein Bauen des Reiches Gottes. Unser Leben gewinnt an Bedeutung nach dem Grad unserer Beteiligung an diesem Bau. Heute, so wie damals, erfordert der Tempelbau eine große Opferwilligkeit. Ohne große Opfer von seiten des ganzen Volkes wäre der Tempel damals unvollendet geblieben. Der Bau des geistlichen Tempels in unserem Zeitalter kann auch nicht vollendet werden ohne große Opfer — Opfer an Gut und Blut.

In unsern Gemeinden Kanadas stehen wir gegenwärtig im Zeichen der Erntedankfeste. Dank und Opfer sind in der Lehre der Heiligen Schrift unzertrennlich miteinander verbunden (vgl. Ps. 50, 23; Hebr. 13, 15-16). Die Erntedankfeste Israels waren Erziehungsfeste zum Opfern. Unser Textwort spricht von einer außergewöhnlichen Opferfreudigkeit der Gemeinde des Herrn im Alten Bunde. Diese Opferwilligkeit ist vorbildlich für uns. Sind wir bereit zu lernen?

Beachten wir zunächst einmal

1. Die starken Motive dieser Opferwilligkeit.

Hinter jeder Offenbarung der Opferwilligkeit kann man starke Beweggründe entdecken. Ein eingehendes Studium dieses Abschnittes dürfte zeigen, daß eine vierfache Erkenntnis diese Opferwilligkeit motivierte.

1) Eine tiefe Erkenntnis der persönlichen Unwürdigkeit.

Dieses Gefühl der Unwürdigkeit kommt zum Ausdruck im Bekenntnis Davids: "Denn was bin ich? Was ist mein Volk, daß wir sollten vermögen freiwillig so viel zu geben?" David erinnert sich an seine Vergangenheit, an die Armut des Hirtenknaben, den Gott zum Führer des Volkes berufen. Das Vermögen, daß der

Herr ihm und seinem Volke geschenkt, war ein Gnadengeschenk Gottes. Davids Bekenntnis hier erinnert an das Gebet Jakobs in 1. Mose 32,11: "...ich bin zu gering aller Barmherzigkeit und aller Treue, die du an deinem Knechte getan hast; denn ich hatte nicht mehr als diesen Stab, da ich über diesen Jordan ging, und nun bin ich zwei Heere geworden."

Diese Erkenntnis, daß alles was wir sind und haben wir nur der Barmherzigkeit Gottes verdanken, dürfen wir nicht verlieren. Im Blick auf die große Ernte, im Blick auf den guten Verdienst, bekennen wir am Erntedankfest: Was bin ich, was ist mein Volk! Eine tiefe Selbst- und Sündenerkenntnis führt zu einer neuen Wertschätzung der göttlichen Gnade — und zu einer größeren Opferwilligkeit.

Als einen weiteren Beweggrund zum Opfern finden wir hier

2. Eine rechte Erkenntnis unserer Haushalterschaft.

In seinem Gebet deutet David zwei bestimmte Grundsätze dieser Haushalterschaft an.

1) Es kommt alles vom Herrn. In Vers 14 lesen wir: "Denn von dir ist alles gekommen..." Dieses ist eine grundlegende Überzeugung für eine richtige Ausübung unserer Haushalterschaft. Was hast du, mein lieber Leser und Freund, daß du nicht empfangen hast? Gesundheit, Arbeitsmöglichkeit, Ernte, und jede andere gute Gabe "kommt von oben herab" (Jak. 1, 17). Hier dürfen wir jedoch nicht stehen bleiben. David geht weiter in seiner Haushalterschaft.

2) Es gehört alles dem Herrn. David bekennt "und ist alles dein." (V.16). Nur auf dem Wege der Selbstverleugnung und der Selbstkreuzigung kommt der Gläubige dahin, daß er freudig mit dem Liederdichter mitspricht: "Nichts mehr mein — und alles dein." Die Erkenntnis, daß die Erde des Herrn ist, und daß alles was wir haben uns nur zeitweilig anvertraut ist, wird ein mächtiger Beweggrund sein zum freudigen Opfern für des Herrn Sache. Wir sind nicht Besitzer, sondern nur Verwalter über des Herrn Güter. Unser Textwort zeigt eine dritte Überzeugung als Beweggrund des Gebens.

3. Eine klare Erkenntnis unseres Pilgerstandes.

David betet: "Denn wir sind Fremdlinge und Gäste vor dir, wie unsere Väter alle. Unser Leben auf Erden ist ein Schatten, und ist kein Aufhalten." (V.15). Gäste und Fremdlinge sind nicht interessiert in der Anhäufung irdischer Schätze. Sie wissen, daß sie nichts in die Welt gebracht haben, und auch nichts hinaus bringen werden (vgl. 1. Tim. 6, 7). Sie gehen mit der tiefen Überzeugung durch diese Welt, daß sie hier keine bleibende Stadt haben (vgl. Hebr. 13, 14). Wie viel mehr hätte unser Volk in Rußland für des Herrn Sache opfern können, wenn es in den guten Zeiten nicht das "Pilgerbewußtsein" verloren hätte! Doch stehen wir heute in Nordamerika nicht in derselben Gefahr? Eine klare

Erkenntnis unsers Pilgerstandes ist ein starker Ansporn zur Opferwilligkeit. Noch eine bedeutungsvolle Erkenntnis muß hervorgehoben werden.

4. Eine erweiterte Erkenntnis der Herrschaft Gottes.

David war sich darüber klar, auf Grund göttlicher Erleuchtung, daß es sich beim Bau des Tempels nicht nur um einen Schrein handle für den religiösen Kultus seines Volkes. Es ging hier um eine Offenbarungsstätte des lebendigen Gottes, dessen Reich ein ewiges Reich ist. Dieser erweiterte Blick ist uns in den Versen 11 und 12 beschrieben, wo David in einen Lobpreis ausbricht "... Dein Herr, ist das Reich, und du bist erhöht über alles zum Obersten... du herrschest über alles..." Diese Überzeugung, daß wir durch unsere Opfer beitragen zur Ausbreitung eines ewigen, unvergänglichen Reiches gibt Freude und Ausdauer in der Arbeit. Unsere Arbeit "in dem Herrn" ist nicht vergeblich (vgl. 1. Kor. 15, 58). Die Opfer an Gut und Leben für die Sache irdischer Weltreiche sind letzten Endes vergebens; die Opfer für des Herrn Sache haben bleibende Bedeutung!

II. Der besondere Charakter dieser Opferwilligkeit.

Was kennzeichnet diese Opferwilligkeit?

1. Sie erfährt das ganze Volk (vgl. 6, 7, 14, 17).

Rechte Opferwilligkeit beginnt immer mit den Führern des Volkes — mit den leitenden Brüdern der Gemeinde. "Da waren die Fürsten der Vaterhäuser, die Fürsten der Stämme Israels... willig und gaben zum Amt im Hause Gottes" (6). Das positive Beispiel der führenden Männer spornte alle Glaubensgenossen an zur aktiven Teilnahme (vgl. 17 b). Bei diesem Tempelbau darf sich niemand zurückziehen. Am Erntedankfest durfte niemand leer vor dem Herrn erscheinen (vgl. 5. Mose 16, 16). Ein jeglicher mußte beitragen "nach dem Segen" den der Herr gegeben hatte. Der Bau des geistlichen Tempels, die Evangelisation der Welt, erfordert den vollen Einsatz aller Glieder der Gemeinde. Wenn du, lieber Leser, nicht Gold und Silber beitragen kannst zu diesem Bau, dann bringe doch Erz, Eisen oder Steine! (vgl. 7 u. 8).

2. Sie zeigt sich in entsprechenden Beiträgen.

Freiwilliges Geben nach der Lehre der Heiligen Schrift bedeutet immer reichliches, und nicht spärliches, Geben. Die großen Opfer für den Tempelbau waren "freiwillige" Gaben (V. 17). Freiwilliges Geben bedeutet nicht willkürliches Geben, sondern so viel geben wie Gott will. Es ist ein Geben nach Vermögen und über Vermögen. Was hier jedoch besonders zu beachten ist, ist der Umstand, daß man die verschiedenen Nöte und Bedürfnisse des großen Werkes in Betracht zog in den Beiträgen. Die verschiedenen Materialien dienten verschiedenen Zwecken. In der Sprache von heute würden wir sagen, daß kein "Zweig der Arbeit"

übersehen wurde. Das gehört auch zur vorbildlichen Opferwilligkeit! Manche Geschwister in unsern Gemeinden sind willig für Äußere Mission zu opfern, aber nicht für Innere Mission. Andere sind bereit fürs Hilfswerk zu geben, aber nicht für Christliche Erziehung. Diese beschränkte Auffassung der Aufgabe ist oft ein großes Hindernis in der richtigen Weiterführung des Tempelbaus! Wenn der Bau vollendet werden soll, müssen alle Teile des großen Werkes Berücksichtigung und Untertützung finden. Unser Textwort gibt uns noch ein Kennzeichen vorbildlicher Opferwilligkeit.

3. Sie offenbart sich in freudiger Stimmung.

"Und das Volk ward fröhlich, daß sie willig waren" (9). "Und David, der König, freute sich hoch und lobte den Herrn"... (10). "Geben ist seliger denn Nehmen", lautet das Wort Jesu, welches uns der Evangelist Lukas aufbewahrt hat (Apg. 20, 35). Solche fröhlichen Geber hat Gott lieb, denn diese Freudigkeit ist ein Beweis, daß Gottes Gnade nicht vergeblich gewesen ist in unserm Leben. Unsere Opfer für des Herrn Sache sollen mit Freuden auf den Altar gelegt werden, und nicht mit Seufzen. Der Herr vergebe uns das Klagen und Murren beim Tempelbau, und helfe uns, Ihm mit Freuden zu dienen!

III. Der weitgehende Segen dieser Opferwilligkeit.

1. Ein positives Beispiel für die kommende Generation.

David war tief besorgt um die Erhaltung und Bewahrung einer opferfreudigen Gesinnung bei seinen Nachfolgern und Nachkommen. Deshalb fleht er: "Herr, Gott unsrer Väter, Abrahams, Isaaks, und Israels, bewahre ewiglich solchen Sinn und Gedanken im Herzen deines Volkes und richte ihre Herzen zu dir" (18). Eine Glaubensgemeinschaft kann geistliche Güter und christliche Grundsätze fortpflanzen durch systematische Belehrung und praktisches Beispiel. Der Glaube des Timotheus hatte schon vorher "gewohnt" in seiner Mutter Eunike und in seiner Großmutter Lois. Die Missionsgeschichte zeigt uns, daß auch der Missionssinn in gewissen Familien von Generation zu Generation fortgepflanzt worden ist. Wozu erziehen wir unsere Kinder durch unser Beispiel — zum Geiz, oder zum Geben? Wir finden hier jedoch noch einen weiteren Segen dieser vorbildlichen Opferwilligkeit.

2. Eine praktische Erneuerung des geistlichen Bundes.

Einmal gab es eine Erneuerung des Bundes mit dem Herrn. Die Hingabe von Mitteln bahnt oft den Weg für die Hingabe des Lebens. Die Erneuerung des Gnadenbundes mit Jehovah zeigte sich bei dieser Gelegenheit in tiefer Beugung und Anbetung (20) sowie auch im Opfern der Brandopfer und Trankopfer. Auch am Erntedankfest geht es bei unserm Gott nicht vornehmlich um das Opfer der Hand, sondern um das Opfer des Herzens. Das

Wort des Herrn durch seinen Knecht Paulus gilt auch uns "... ich suche nicht das Eure, sondern euch" (2. Kor. 12, 14).

Die Erneuerung des geistlichen Bundes bezieht sich jedoch auch auf das Verhältnis der Gläubigen zueinander. Das Opfern für den gemeinsamen Tempelbau verbindet die Mitarbeiter zu einer innigen Glaubens- und Leidensgemeinschaft. In den letzten Jahren haben sich unsere Gaben für das Werk des Herrn vermehrt. Dieses ist jedoch kein Beweis einer größeren Opferwilligkeit in unsern Kreisen, denn der Herr mißt unsere Opferwilligkeit nicht nach der Größe der Gabe die wir auf Seinen Altar legen, sondern nach der Größe der Summe die wir für uns behalten (vgl. Lukas 21, 1-4). Die Vollendung des geistlichen Tempels ist zum großen Teil an unsere Opferwilligkeit gebunden. Die steigende Not einerseits und der zunehmende Wohlstand andererseits, erfordern eine größere Opferwilligkeit unsererseits. Gott helfe uns so zu geben, daß wir am Tage Seiner Zukunft als die guten Haushalter erfunden werden möchten!

J. A. Toews

BOOK REVIEW

The Use of Religious Poetry

Jacob Trapp (ed.), *Modern Religious Poems*, New York; Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964, 304 pp.

In his Foreword to his anthology of contemporary religious poems, the editor states that "poetry and religion have always been closely allied." This is not to say that all poetry is religious in nature and all religion is poetry, but that religion often expresses itself in poetry and poetry often meets the religious needs of the human heart. For example, the Hebrew Psalms and the great hymns of the Christian Church are poems that will be part of the great tradition of mankind for all time. Poems like this, although the Psalms are also part of the inspired Word of God, give expression to what man feels, believes and exper-

iences with regard to God, man and this world in a way that no other form of expression could do. The poet, particularly the Christian poet, thus stands between heaven and earth, verbalizing, revealing and proclaiming the divine order of the universe.

Poetry and religion, according to the editor, often speak with one voice. The "imaginative compassion" of which Thomas Hardy speaks, is of the essence of both. Both treat such universal themes as love, hate, doubt, suffering, death and immortality. Both rejoice in the beauty and majesty of God's creation. Both keep themselves open to the myst-

eries all around us. Unlike science which attempts to explain, analyze and expose the mysterious, poetry and religion instill reverence and awe in the presence of the hidden and divine. "Poetry, next to great music," according to the editor, "best expresses man's sense of the numinous, the ineffable."

Good poetry is not didactic; where it really communicates ideas and feelings, it stirs within the reader or the listener an inward response, "a music of meaning", similar to that which set the poet singing. Religion at its most effective is not didactic either. At its best it communicates living impulses from person to person, person to God and God to person, as in the Christian religion. A great religious poem is a genuine, spontaneous religious feeling expressed in poetic form. Rather than moralizing or "teaching a lesson", it simply exists like a beautiful flower, to the delight, comfort and strength of the reader or listener. A great religious poem is a bit of heaven in a world of woe.

The present anthology includes many poems of praise and prayer, poems with biblical themes, poems of the Christian year and the figure of the Son of Man, poems of human brotherhood and poems of profoundly religious questioning and realization. It is refreshing to note that many of the poets represented in this collection, have after "wandering in a wilderness of bitter disillusionment" returned to the spiritual quest. They thus speak from the heart and their "message" often reaches the heart of those who listen to them.

Bliss Carman's "Veni Creator" is one of the book's soul-stirring poems of praise. The poet's pantheistic tendencies are well known and should be guarded against, but most

of his poetry can be read with enjoyment by the discriminate reader.

After worshiping God as the Lord of Nature and the affairs of men, he concludes in the last three stanzas:

I, too must climb in wonder,
Uplift at thy command, —
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust or mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

Be thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,
Lord of the world's elation,
Thou breath of things unseen!

In "A Prayer in Spring" Robert Frost opens his heart and mind to the delights of spring. Note how the author integrates sensuous pleasure with his devotion to God:

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers
today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us
here
All simply in the springtime of the
year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard
white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts
by night;
And make us happy in the happy
bees,
The swarm dilating round the perfect
trees.

And make us happy in the darting
bird
That suddenly above the bees is
heard,
The meteor that thrusts in with
needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid air stands
still.

For this is love and nothing else is
love,
The which it is reserved for God
above
To sanctify to what far ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfill.

From praise and prayer the anthology turns to the great festivals of the Christian calendar. T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi," for example, becomes very immediate because of its contemporary ring of doubt and hope. We perceive at once that Eliot did not have so much the Magi in mind as modern man who is in search of "evidence and no doubt". A similar mood we find in the poems relating to the Holy Week, written by such well-known poets as Thomas Hardy, Rainer Maria Rilke and the Russian Boris Pasternak (the last two in good translation). These and other writers are strangely drawn to the life and suffering of Christ because in them they find the hops of redemption and comfort for their own perplexities. Lines like "The old loneliness comes over him" (Rilke), "That was the day they killed the Son of God" (Muir), "The terrible solitude of the Cross" (Olson), and "the light of a taper which had suddenly gone out" (Pasternak) remind us forcefully of modern terminology, modern theology, and modern religious problems.

Contemporary poetry also concerns itself with such practical issues as civil rights, the brotherhood of man and questions of war and peace. Stephan Spender's "The War God" is a passionate plea for peace and reconciliation between nations:

Why cannot the one good
Benevolent feasible
Final dove, descend?

And the wheat be divided?
And the soldiers sent home?
And the barriers torn down?
And the enemies forgiven?
And there be no retribution?
Because the conqueror
Is victim of his own power
That hammers his heart
From fear of former fear . . .

And Edith Lovejoy Pierce prays:

Give us to understand that hope is
yet allowed,
That smoke will not scorch the
heavenly color and form;
Lord, let they rainbow appear, not
after, but during, the storm
O God, set thy kiss on the cloud!

Yet in the midst of insecurity and war there is in this world one place of heavenly refuge, E. E. Cummings "little church (far from the frantic world with its rapture and anguish)". This church stands "erect in the deathless truth of His presence (welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)".

After a life of joy and sorrow, praise and doubt, death is sure to come to the saint as well as to the sinner. But for the Christian death holds no terror. As for the Greeks who picture Death as a handsome young man and twin-brother to Sleep, so to the believing Christian Death is a welcome guest, bringing rest, peace and victory with him.

Emily Dickenson approaches Death confidently and positively with words of undying beauty:

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children
played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that
seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day

I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

When we were children we loved poetry in the form of nursery rhymes and songs. As young people we read poems aloud in our homes, recited them in church, and occasionally wrote them ourselves. Poetry, however, is not for children and young people only; letters from less well-to-do countries (the Soviet Union, for example) indicate that ordinary people still find pleasure and comfort in reading and writing poems. We must admit that during the "hard times" in this country we warmed up more readily to poetry

than today: we found in religious poetry enjoyment and edification. How many of us still read the occasional poem in our "Rundschau"? (Our English publications hardly ever publish a poem). Is it possible that prosperity and secularism have dulled our poetic feeling and imagination — as well as our heart-felt religious feeling? A revival of interest in religious poetry and an upsurge of religious life seem to go hand in hand; and a discriminate use of **Modern Religious Poems**, and similar anthologies, could contribute to that needed revival.

—Harry Loewsn

Shechem

by G. Ernest Wright, London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1965.

There are some experiences in life which most of us will have to enjoy vicariously. A trip to the land where Jesus lived is possible for some, but the leisure to let one's hand sift through the sands of that land until they tell their story, exists for only a few. How opportune it is then when an expert makes it possible for us to share such an experience in language we can understand. This is the task and accomplishment of Dr. Wright as he sketches "the biography of a Biblical city".

In 184 pages of text, 113 illustrations, and about 80 pages of appendices, a story constructed from the finds of many digs at Tel Shechem is fully detailed. A glance at the table of contents indicates that the development proceeds from the identification of the site, through the two excavations and their achievements, to an historical survey of Canaanite, Israelite and Samaritan times. Lest anyone should hesitate at this point, the dust jacket allur-

ingly calls, "In an easy non-technical style, G. Ernest Wright has written a thorough, scientifically sound description of the findings of the Drew-McCormick Expedition. For anyone interested in religion or ancient history, . . . (this) will be a fascinating and meaningful experience."

While a reader may resent being told to begin a book by reading a part at the end of the story, in this case the wise reader will absorb Appendix 1 "Principles of Field Technique" as a do-it-yourself guide to the main narrative. In order to appreciate what is involved, one's imagination must go on from the account of many dusty details. However, one is spared the heat and wind, and the rigours of working and living in an eastern culture.

Unfortunately the world of archaeology has a language of its own. Thus in attempting to popularize its findings the most immediate problem is one of translation. Either the

reader learns a new vocabulary, or the writer reduces the technical terms to a bare minimum. Also one must be clear as to the place of archaeology in the pursuit of knowledge. Our author contends that it is not an isolated discipline, but rather the research arm of the historian. And finally, it is obvious that one's basic premises with reference to the Scriptural narrative will determine any interpretation of actual findings.

With reference to the translation of archaeological terminology, Dr. Wright demands of the reader that he familiarize himself with the general vocabulary. Once this has been accomplished one has the feeling of being in with the diggers. However, should one fail to master the new vocabulary, the sections related to the excavations themselves convey little meaning, and one lacks the background to judge the interpretations. The numerous photographs and drawings give the many statistics a much needed third dimension.

As the research arm of history archaeology combines the scientific method and the artistic touch. To comprehend a people of past ages by a study of what they did and left behind, takes both experience and a certain artistry. The secrets of a mound's history are discovered in the way the various earth and stone layers got into their present position. For the most part dating is dependent on the discovery and identification of pottery in the different layers. However, all of this must finally be related to literary sources of the periods under question.

Dr. Wright accepts the Bible as the most important literary source. He sees the references to Shechem

as sufficiently frequent to make historical hypotheses about the city both possible and significant. It is not easy to determine what influence modern literary form-critical and tradition-history investigations about Shechem, as developed by Edward Nielsen, have on the tentative conclusions in the continuing exploration of ancient Shechem. The concept of the city-state system whereby each small state was controlled by a heavily fortified capital city, fits with the problems of Joshua during the conquest. Not so obvious, however, is the idea that Shechem became the center for an annual ceremony of worship in which covenant renewal was the central theme. At least Joshua 24: 25, 26 state clearly the establishment of a covenant and the presence of a sanctuary at Shechem. Nevertheless, the discovery of the House of El-berith as mentioned in Judges 9, whatever one's interpretation of its religious significance, is viewed by Dr. Wright as a most important correlation between the archaeological discoveries and biblical tradition.

One of the interesting sidelights in the book is the critical examination of the work which Professor Ernest Sellin did from 1913 to 1934. Although a theologian, Sellin was a self-trained archaeologist in the days when methodology was not fully developed. His findings, although only partially preserved, are a constant challenge to the modern Drew-McCormick expeditions. At one time they are able to verify the findings, while at another time the unrecorded digging of forty years ago makes it impossible to know now what the real findings were.

The end of Shechem as a city was evidently brought about by the Jews from Jerusalem. In 107 B.C. John

Hyrcaeus campaigned successfully against Samaria and probably destroyed Shechem at about the same time. It is interesting to recall that as Jesus sat talking to the woman at Jacob's well that the mound of Shechem was almost visible. Through this book the stones that

were silent then, now speak. The effort one must put forth for understanding is amply rewarded by the enlarged horizons. Shechem is no longer just a name, but a city which speaks of the time from Abraham and gives new meaning to that day.

H. Swartz

NOTES

(Notes and References — "The Living Encounter with Christ Through Faith", from page 15)

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- 3 Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, translated by F. Hassold and edited by Ed. Preuss (Springfield: Concordia Theological Seminary), Vol. I, p. 517.
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- 5 Herman A. Preus and Edmund Smits, editors, *The Doctrine of Man in Classical Lutheran Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962), p. xii.
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- 8 Leonard Hutter, *Compend of Lutheran Theology*, translated by H. E. Jacobs and G. F. Spieker, (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Bookstore, 1868), p. 10.
- 9 Nikolaus Hunnius, *Glaubenslehre* (Noerdlingen: C. H. Beck, 1850), p. 230.
- 10 Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 579.
- 11 Gerhard, *Handbuch*, p. 322.
- 12 Gerhard, *Heilige Betrachtungen*, p. 158.
- 13 Johann Gerhard, *Uebung der Gottseligkeit*, translated from the Latin (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1874), p. 75.
- 14 Gerhard, *Betrachtungen*, p. 43.
- 15 Hunnius, *Glaubenslehre*, p. 260.
- 16 Brunner, *Encounter*, p. 55.
- 17 Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation, Dogmatics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962) III, 16.
- 18 Brunner, *Encounter*, p. 172.
- 19 P. G. Schrotenboer, *A. New Apologetics: An Analysis and Appraisal of the Eristic Theology of Emil Brunner* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1955), p. 200.
- 20 Brunner, *Encounter*, p. 172.
- 21 Emil Brunner, *Revelation and Reason* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), p. 9.