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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### A Source-Book for Gnosticism.<sup>1</sup>

THIS collection meets a real want. We have had no source-book for Gnosticism which gave the original pieces; but now, instead of hunting through Irenæus and Hippolytus and Epiphanius, for example, we possess a convenient précis of the relevant data about Simon Magus, the Ophites, the Carpocratians, Basilides, and, above all, Valentinus and his school (including the letter of Ptolemæus to Flora). With this in his hands, the student is equipped for the study of a recent book like Professor Burkitt's *Church and Gnosis*, although Dr. Völker has naturally catered for German readers in his brief bibliographies. There are no notes, except a few at the foot of the page upon variant readings in the text. One regrets the absence of materials about pagan gnosticism. But evidently considerations of space forbade the inclusion of anything except Christian gnostic speculations. The selections have been made with good judgment, the texts are carefully edited, and altogether the handbook is thoroughly satisfactory. It would be a further service if Dr. Völker would some day edit a similar volume on broader lines, including extracts from the Hermetica and other extra-Christian theosophical literature. Meantime, for this volume we are highly grateful.

bach, according to Professor Wünsch. Barth is the most satisfactory critic of Feuerbach, it is said, for he alone seems to realize the significance of Feuerbach's religious philosophy.

The first part of the book deals with the question at issue, the need of understanding the full sense of one's being. To this various answers have been given, and these are examined, in the realms of science, philosophy, history, etc. After which the author passes to a positive answer on the basis of revealed religion, as the one source of truth about the full meaning of destiny. He differs from the Barthians on the subject of revelation; indeed, one chapter deals with what is known of God in 'profane reality.' But he emphasizes strongly the eternal truth of God to which the present reality of man witnesses in its very imperfections and struggles, and he would have theologians alive to the broad range of evidence for their subject. To English readers this may not sound particularly new. But it is urged with quite novel power by the Marburg scholar, who has the merit and charm of impressing the reader with a sense that he writes because he has looked into more than his own heart before he set down his arguments. An alive book, independent and, in the best sense of the term, positive.

### A Theology of Reality.<sup>2</sup>

PROFESSOR WÜNSCH has written an important, thoughtful book upon the responsibilities of theology in Protestant thought. His belief in the right and value of such theology depends upon a conviction that theologians ought to face frankly the real objections tabled by atheism and scepticism, as well as the difficulties raised by modern life. For example, he devotes an entire chapter to Feuerbach and Heidegger. If people used to be taunted with reading Bolingbroke no longer, they might equally well be blamed for not knowing the force of Feuer-

<sup>1</sup> *Quellen zur Geschichte der christlichen Gnosis*, herausgegeben, von Lic. Dr. Walther Völker (Mohr, Tübingen; M.5.80).

<sup>2</sup> *Wirklichkeitschristentum: Über die Möglichkeit einer Theologie des Wirklichen*, von Georg Wünsch (Mohr, Tübingen; M.13; bound M.14.80 [Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie, iii.]).

### Bauer on the Fourth Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

IT is twenty years since this commentary first appeared. From one hundred and eighty-nine pages it has grown to two hundred and fifty-three, partly because the author has kept abreast of the critical work done upon the subject (he notices Professor Garth Macgregor's edition, for example, and Dr. W. F. Howard's monograph in English), but mainly on account of the space required for parallels from the Mandæan literature. Those who had hoped that Dr. Bauer would have scrapped the latter from his commentary will be disappointed. But there are no superfluous words in the notes; the compact, penetrating exposition remains as it was, and it is easy to follow the line of argument, with a Greek text in one's hands. To estimate the meaning of any passage, it is still needful, of course, to

<sup>3</sup> *Das Johannesevangelium*, erklärt von D. Walter Bauer. Dritte, verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage, 1933 (Mohr, Tübingen; M.10 [Section six of the *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*]).

work with larger commentaries such as those by Lagrange, Zahn, and Bernard, where the possibilities of different views are more fully handled. Bauer's edition will never supersede these works. But it retains a high value of its own, whatever be thought of its position as an interpretation of the Fourth Gospel; the stress upon the syncretistic background of thought is important, all the more so since Bauer admits that there is no literary filiation certain between the Gospel and either the Mandæan books or even Philo. The introduction, or what in an ordinary commentary would be the introduction, comes at the end, after the exegesis has been carried through; the book is dated in the first quarter of the second century, somewhere in Syria (perhaps), and any apostolic authorship is denied.

### Ideas of Man.<sup>1</sup>

IN the wake of Dilthey and others, Dr. Wach surveys the philosophical conceptions of man, with special reference to the three great religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. But his range covers a wider field of appreciation. In mediæval Christianity, as he shows, the ideas of man were fairly homogeneous, so far as East and West were concerned, since the Aristotelian philosophy, in its Arabian form, influenced all the three religions in their speculative reconstructions. But earlier, the Greek stress on 'humanism,' which culminated in Epicurus, was vital; whereas the religious outlook of the East tended towards the idea of man as part of a theistic or redemptive synthesis. When a religion thinks of man as a 'creature,' a new notion of human personality emerges. Dr. Wach acutely analyses the cross-currents, set up by the interaction of Hellenic and Oriental thought, not omitting the Chinese contribution or the Buddhist. The essay is in part a contribution to comparative religion, but its chief interest lies in the philosophical exposition. An English reader is reminded, now and then, of two books; one is Miss Julia Wedgwood's *Moral Ideal*, and the other Father Waggett's Hulsean Lectures on *Knowledge and Virtue*, both of which supplement the brief sketch provided in Dr. Wach's keen essay. It is fair to mention these, since neither is too well known to the present generation, and both provide a rich

<sup>1</sup> *Typen religiöser Anthropologie. Ein Vergleich der Lehre vom Menschen im religionsphilosophischen Denken von Orient und Okzident*, von Dr. Joachim Wach (Mohr, Tübingen; M. 1.50).

amount of material, in the light of which Dr. Wach's estimate becomes more intelligible.

### The Coptic Church in Contemporary Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

HERR STROTHMANN'S monograph presents an invaluable up-to-date survey of the Copts at the present day, which appeals to students of politics as well as to those interested in Church history. From the first the Coptic Church has been in a difficult position; that is, ever since the period of the fifth century, when it severed relations with the Greek Church over the question of the Chalcedonian formula. The difficulties increased when the Arabs conquered Egypt. To the doctrinal problem there was now added not only the problem of Egyptian nationalism, but that of the strain between Islam and local Christianity in its monophysite form. It is familiar, though not as familiar as it should be, to European Christians, the tale of the hard-pressed Coptic Church, maintaining its faith and patriotic spirit amid circumstances of special tension. Herr Strothmann brings out with insight and trained knowledge several factors in the prolonged struggle, in order to throw light upon the present position and prospects of the Copts, referring with praise to a number of English historical scholars such as Mr. Crum and Mr. Scott-Moncrieff. The past is surveyed in order to throw light upon the present, and the tenacity of the Coptic faith emerges afresh as a result of the historical appreciation. The Copts are a minority Church, claiming national sympathies. It is five years since an attempt was made to take a census of Egypt. In that census, out of a population of over fourteen millions, almost thirteen millions were found to be Muhammadan. The large majority of the million Orthodox Christians are Copts, the Roman Catholics, the Evangelicals, and the Jews, each numbering between sixty-three and sixty-six thousand. The present patriarch, John Nineteenth, who was elected after some trouble in 1928, is the hundred and thirteenth in succession since the original of the Alexandrian Church in the first century. The apostolic succession, the doctrinal position, and the national interest, within the intricate synthesis of modern conditions, are all

<sup>2</sup> *Die Koptische Kirche in der Neuzeit*, by R. Strothmann 'Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie,' viii. (Mohr, Tübingen; M. 8.70.)

worked out by Herr Strothmann with clear and precise care. The crisis created by insurgent nationalism for a Church like the Copts is obvious, but his closing word is that 'there is no unbroken African Christianity except that which exists to-day under the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria,'

and this record is not without promise and hope. It is a record which ought to awaken an intelligent sympathy with this sorely strained branch of the Christian Church in the East.

JAMES MOFFATT.

*New York.*

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## Entre Nous.

### Common Seeking and Finding.

*A Daughter of the Samurai*, by Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto, is a book to be commended to the curious—in the best sense of the word—that is, to children and to the unspoiled. It is a beautiful illustration of Walt Whitman's saying: 'As soon as histories are properly told there is no more need of romances.'

Here we have the history told by herself, of the life, from childhood to middle age, of a woman of high rank, a daughter of one of the noble feudal families of Japan. She must have been born about 1867. And if we can imagine having been born in, say, 1406 and in adolescence, having been dragged helter-skelter across the ensuing centuries to 1933, we might get some impression of what happened to Mrs. Sugimoto. The record of this passage from one era to another, from feudal to modern Japan, and thence to modern America, makes an extraordinary impression upon the reader. Seldom has it fallen to the lot of a writer to show such divergent pages of history, reflected not merely through a historian's mind, but through the personal intimate experiences of a sincere and intelligent contemporary.

The book falls into four main sections. The first section shows us the writer living in surroundings whose nearest Western parallel would be one of our great ducal houses in the Middle Ages: only, instead of Catholic piety pervading its customs and atmosphere, we have a grave and devout Buddhism, with Shinto elements intermingled.

Not the writer herself, but the elder sister, remembers the capture of the ducal mansion by the new democratic party, its tragic burning by the young mistress's own hand, to prevent its falling into the enemy's possession. The father was in prison and in imminent danger of death, and his girl wife, disguised as a peasant, her stiff straw coat barely hiding her silken robes, hid the heir and his

sisters and herself in outlying farms. Every night after their bath their faces were rubbed with persimmon juices to give a peasant darkness to their cheeks. Two years later feudal Japan was, politically, dead, and the prisoners were released, and the old home, in a shadowy way, restored, all its former splendours gone, but its manners and rituals retained.

Here we see little Etsu-ko, the writer of this autobiography, growing up in a world so strange and remote from ours, yet so finely civilized, that it is difficult, almost impossible, to believe that we are reading the life of a contemporary, and not some new and marvellous fairy tale.

At the age of six we see the little girl seated demurely before the priest, having her lessons from the four books of Confucius. She is destined by her father to be a priestess. For two hours she sits like a statue, then, unheard-of breach of propriety, one little knee slips a trifle, the body sways slightly, and instantly the priest must close his book, saying quietly but sternly, 'Little miss, it is evident that your mental ability to-day is not suited for study. You should retire to your room and meditate.' So she goes.

In this first part of the book one of the most beautiful chapters is that which describes the feast of Ura Bon, the Welcome to Souls Returned, that is, the yearly visit of the spirits of the ancestors to their former homes. Little Etsu-Bo's father has lately died, and here we have a naïve and exquisite picture of her mother, the young widow, singing as she prepares the house with flowers and many sweet formalities for the annual visit from the unknown land.

But Etsu-Bo after all is not to be a priestess, and in the next part of the book she tells of her betrothal to a Japanese youth in America whom she has never seen, and of her life in a mission