

clear implication is that at the end of the millennium the wicked are raised to physical life, in contrast to the "blessed and holy" ones who experienced "the first resurrection" at the beginning of the millennium. (As a matter of added interest, it appears that in this particular segment of his interpretation, Eller has suddenly "calendarized" in spite of his rather persistent attempt throughout his volume to avoid doing so!)

The foregoing several examples are not the only items with which this reviewer would take exception. Nevertheless, in spite of various misgivings, I would recommend Eller's work as an eminently readable and thought-provoking work, whose basic point of view adds a fresh breath to the study of an important and intriguing NT book.

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Feiner, Johannes, and Vischer, Lukas, eds. *The Common Catechism: A Book of Christian Faith*. Trans. by David Bourke, et al. New York: Seabury, 1975. xxv + 690 pp. \$10.95.

The publication of this massive work ushers in a new era in ecumenical work. Ten years after the Dutch Catechism it offers the first comprehensive and systematic treatise on the Christian religion produced jointly by Catholic and Protestant theologians since the 16th-century Reformation.

This is no question-and-answer pamphlet like the old Baltimore Catechism, but a 690-page treatment of the essentials of the Christian faith by a team of 36 scholars, edited jointly by Johannes Feiner of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and Lukas Vischer, Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. The contributors, Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist theologians from Germany, France and Switzerland, include such names as Grillmeier, Pannenberg, Laurentin and Lehmann.

The book moves down a very narrow path, seeking not to favor either tradition over the other. It is divided into five parts. Part One is devoted to the question of God as it presents itself to our contemporaries (pp. 1-89). This section is really only preliminary to the subsequent part "God in Jesus Christ" (pp. 91-275). Jesus Christ "in his work and in his person" is today's answer to the God question. Biblical criticism receives due attention, and the Christology of Chalcedon is vindicated. Part Three, on "The New Man" (pp. 277-395), discusses the effects of Christ's death and resurrection on the modern Christian, more particularly on life we share in the community of the faithful. This is followed by an important section on "Faith and the World" (pp. 397-550) striking out into the realm of Christian ethics, both in general terms (conscience and law, freedom and authority) and in very specific questions (religious freedom, sexuality, ecology, war and peace).

The final part of the book deals frankly and carefully with the doctrinal issues that still divide Protestants and Roman Catholics (pp. 551-666). This, it is emphasized, "is in no way a kind of appendix on a subsidiary subject" (p. 552). The questions singled out are Scripture and tradition, grace and work, the sacraments, marriage, Mary, and finally the church, with special

reference to papal authority and infallibility. Added as appendices to the book are the statements on the Eucharist and the ministry in the English language recently agreed upon by Roman Catholic-Anglican, Methodist-Roman Catholic, and Lutheran-Roman Catholic conferences (pp. 667-681).

Beyond all doubt, this volume portrays a remarkable ecumenical achievement. It mirrors the conviction that "the statements that we can make in common are quantitatively and qualitatively more important than any contradictions" (p. x). But, following the trend of German scholarship, it also puts considerable limitations on the Bible. Thus, we are no longer to say "The Bible is the word of God," but rather that it *becomes* God's word for anyone who accepts it as such (pp. 100-101). The Ten Commandments are "to a large extent conditioned by their age and their cultural environment" (p. 436). Likewise, in the gospels we have stories about Jesus which cannot be regarded simply as events from the Lord's life, and sayings of his "which the historical Jesus never uttered" (p. 96). The authors also hold that "we can learn virtually nothing" from the Scriptures on specific questions of sexual morality (p. 498). One frequently wonders whether the catechism was meant for mutual enlightenment and edification or for the instruction of enquirers.

The English translation made by eight English-speaking experts under the editorship of John Cumming achieves a level of readability rarely found in works whose original language was German. Still, the book remains too technical for most lay readers and insufficiently documented for scholars. Many of the subjects are treated on the basis of recent theological investigations, but the policy of omitting references and footnotes makes it often difficult for the reader to follow up the discussion. While this is indeed a work of Continental theology, the lack of inclusion of either Eastern Orthodox or scholars from the English-speaking world will to some be a definite weakness.

The book, however, should not be faulted for its European flavor. It may very well be what makes it so commandingly contemporary. Not only the catechumens, but the initiated members and even the theologically trained ministers and pastors or priests will find here plenty to chew and thrive on.

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Hanson, Anthony T. *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974. xiv + 329 pp. \$8.95.

The focus of Hanson's study is the question of the significance and validity of Paul's interpretation of Scripture. Logically this question requires prior clarification of Paul's method of interpretation, and Hanson sets out to provide this in his first seven chapters. These are really a series of separate studies of important passages primarily in Romans and Galatians, including Col 2:14-15; Rom 3:1-20, 5:1-8:36; Rom 4; Gal 2-3; Rom 3-4; Rom 9:6-13, Gal 4:21f; Rom 11:1-23; and Rom 12:9-13:10. In harmony with the overall theme, particular attention is paid in each study to Paul's use of the OT and also to the influence of traditional, especially rabbinic, interpretations. The