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OUTSTANDING RELIGIOUS  
BOOKS  
OF  
1948-1949

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*Selected by the Book Selection Committee,*

RELIGIOUS BOOKS ROUND TABLE,  
*American Library Association.*

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# 50 Leading Religious Books

Presented by the Book Selection Committee

A.L.A. RELIGIOUS BOOKS ROUND TABLE

These 1948-49 titles, chosen for A.L.A. by eminent authorities are well worth considering for purchase if you do not have them

THE RELIGIOUS Books Round Table of the American Library Association again presents its list of fifty outstanding religious books, published in America during the year May 1, 1948-May 1, 1949. The Book Selection Committee, made up of members representing many religious points of view, does not present a unanimous slate. In fact no title received recommendation from all the committee. It is to be expected that there are titles included which would by some members individually be rejected.

The committee appreciates the cooperation of the members of the Religious Book Publishers Group and the other publishers who submitted books for consideration. It is unfortunate that many books deserving to be considered were not submitted by their publishers.

As one examines the selections of this year one is aware that the world view of religion is again the center of much of the best that was issued by the press. The report of the Amsterdam Assembly brings a message of promise and also a clear warning in the query: "What has the Church to contribute to society in its present extremity?"

The dynamic Bishop Aulén raises the prophet's cry for world faith in his *Faith of the Christian Church*. Dr. Latourette's *The Christian Outlook*, with its logical reasoning of deep religious conviction, speaks out of the author's perspective on religious history. Dr. Brunner, contemporary theologian in *Christianity and Civilisation* and Mr. Toynbee, world historian, in *Civilization on Trial* both approach the same problem of meeting the atomic-age crises.

## NO FICTION

This year sees a number of biographies including Thomas Merton, General Evange-line Booth, Gandhi and Saint Paul. All four are written for laymen readers. There are no fiction titles on the list. It is unfortunate that in this area of lay appeal no title received committee recommendation.

For the clergy there is the excellent study of Maves and Cedarleaf *Older People and the Church*.

In the Biblical field, Ronald Knox's new translation of the Vulgate Old Testament may well be the work of the year that will become a permanent fixture in religious literature. Leslie's book on *The Psalms* and Goldman's *Book of Books* are approaches which will be of interest to students of the Bible.

There are a number of valuable new editions of the religious classics. Welcomed is the attractive *Theologica Germanica*, the devotional classic which was a favorite of Martin Luther. The *Basic Writings* of Saint Augustine are particularly timely in view of the interest stimulated by the Great Books movement in the message of this philosophical son of the church. Students will also welcome the new translation of the Gita with its clarity of thought and its extensive notes.

## SUCCESSFUL YEAR

A number of anthologies have appeared which bring together related materials of religious literature. *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* will be welcomed by those who do not already have a favorite religious poetry anthology. This work should certainly be included in the next edition of Granger's *Poetry Index*. *Return to Tradition* meets a particular need of Roman Catholic parochial school libraries.

Many other areas are represented including the controversial. Dr. Neill's *Makers of the Modern Mind* present interpretations of twelve influential personalities. His treatment of Luther and Calvin may ruffle many Presbyterians and Lutherans. Paul Blanshard's book *American Freedom and Catholic Power* has been sharply criticized by both Catholics and non-Catholics, and we have not had such a display of critical vitriol during this generation. Disagree as many do, censure as some have, both Neill and Blanshard have exercised the traditional American freedom of speech. What is inaccurate should be corrected and questions should be answered.

A broader work of criticism is the symposium *Our Protestant Heritage*, presented by the faculty of the Union Theological Seminary of Richmond, Va. The authors offer logical evidences in the history of religion for a tradition of continuous protesting to the status quo.

The committee found much that was outstanding in a total of 130 of the 211 titles submitted. The limit of fifty titles for this list has been observed. We believe this has been a successful year of religious book publishing.

PAUL GRATKE, Chairman Book Selection Committee, A.L.A. Religious Books Round Table

## The List

ANDERSON, R. G. *The City and the Cathedral*. Longmans. 1948. \$3.50.

A pageant of 13th-century life surrounding the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The intimate portrayal seethes with the political, educational and religious life of the times. The book has something of the quality of Henry Adams' *Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres*.

ANSON, P. F. *Churches; Their Plan and Furnishing*. Bruce. 1948. \$6.50.

Every congregation building or furnishing a church will prize this book for its practical information and technical illustrations.—HCK

ATTWATER, Donald. *A Catholic Dictionary*. 2nd ed., rev. Macmillan. 1949. \$5.

A careful and scholarly work dealing with thousands of words, not only having to do with the Catholic church, but terms which are commonly used in philosophy, theology and religious institutions in general.—DET.

AUGUSTINE, Saint. *Basic Writings*. Edited by Whitney Jennings Oates. Random. 1948. 2 vols. \$10.

The text is chiefly that of the Philip Schaff edition of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, long out of print. The editor supplies an introduction for the contemporary reader. The contents include: Confessions; Twelve Treatises; City of God; On the Trinity.

AULEN, Gustaf, bishop. *Faith of the Christian Church*. Muhlenberg. 1948. \$5.

The Bishop of Strängnäs is Scandinavia's spokesman for ecumenical Christian faith. His statement is an exposition of the essentials of Christian theology particularly as common to the "Lundinsian school of theology."

BAILLIE, D. M. *God Was in Christ*. Scribner. 1948. \$2.75.

A clear and direct consideration of the Incarnation and Atonement which preserves the distinctive Biblical and traditional emphasis, but which everywhere reveals an awareness of the modern temper. The result is a singularly convincing treatment of the central theme of the Christian Faith.—EL.

BENNETT, J. C. *Christianity and Communism*. Association. 1948. \$1.50.

A study notable for its presentation of the alternatives in Christianity and Communism. A clear analysis of the main issue which Christianity must meet together.

*Bhagavadgita*. Ed. by S. Rahdakrishnan. Harper, 1948. \$3.50.

A new prose translation, by a famous Hindu scholar-philosopher, of the great religious poem of India. The introductory expository essay bears the marks of complete competence. The Sanskrit text is given with the English and the translator provides numerous explanatory notes. The Gita is difficult for the Western mind, but no reader can fail to appreciate its profound religious spirit.

BIBLE. *The Old Testament in English*. Translated by Ronald Arbuthnott Knox. Vol. I. Genesis to Esther. Sheed & Ward. 1948. \$7.

Monsignor Ronald Knox translates into a modern and fresh English which brings the meaning of the Old Testament within contemporary understanding. While not an official publication of the Catholic Church, it is a sincere effort on the part of one of its scholars to meet the problem of a modern Bible text.

BLANSHARD, Paul. *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. Beacon. 1949. \$3.50.

A critical study of American Catholicism which is accompanied by extensive documentation in the form of quotations, notes, and a supplementary bibliography. A pamphlet reply has been prepared by George H. Dunne, S.J. "Paul Blanshard and the Catholic Church" issued by and available from *America*, a *Catholic Review of the Week*.

BRUNNER, Emil. *Christianity and Civilization*. Scribner. 1948. \$2.50.

These Gifford Lectures constitute a brilliant statement of our present predicament and of the direct bearing of the Christian faith upon society.—DET.

BUBER, Martin. *Hasidism*. Philosophical. 1948. \$3.75.

The principles of Hasidism, a way of living rather than a system of teaching, are advocated by this eminent Jewish savant.—HCK.

DANIEL-ROPS, Henry. *Sacred History*. Longmans. 1949. \$4.50.

The civilization of the Old Testament world is attractively portrayed for the modern readers. The book, written in French and first published in Paris in 1943, was destroyed by the Gestapo.

FERM, Vergilius, ed. *Religion in the Twentieth Century*. Philosophical. 1948. \$5.

Informative and authentic articles on the most important living religions, written for the most part by adherents of these faiths, in an effort to elucidate the main tenets, history and peculiar genius of each religion. A most useful introduction to the study of world religions, with extensive bibliographical suggestions for further reading.—HCK-DT.

FINEGAN, Jack. *Youth Asks About Religion*. Association. 1949. \$2.

Frank, honest and enlightening answers to 100 religious questions arising in young people's minds today. The author has the courage to give direct answers in the language of modern youth.—HCK-DT.

FRIEDMAN, L. M. *Pilgrims in a New Land*. Jewish Pub. Soc. 1948. \$4.

An instructive book on the role the Jews have played in the development of the United States. The Jewish pilgrims urge as pioneers in America to be an example to the seeds of Abraham and to the followers of Jesus.

GOLDMAN, Solomon. *The Book of Human Destiny*. Vol. I: *The Book of Books*. Harper. 1948. \$3.75.

A learned Hebrew authority explains the Jewish approach to the Holy Scriptures and devotes more than half of his book to an estimable collection of literary references to the Bible.—HCK.

GOODMAN, Philip. *Purim Anthology*. Jewish Pub. Soc. 1949. \$4.

The timely deliverance of the Jews from their Persian enemies and their vindication are celebrated in the feast of Purim—a time of feasting and gladness, and sending portions to one another, and gifts to the poor. This compilation of the literature of Purim is especially timely for the Jews, especially informative to Gentiles. A music supplement and an excellent bibliography add greatly to the value of this anthology.

GRIERSON, Herbert. *And the Third Day*. Macmillan. 1948. \$3.50.

An anthology based on the theme of immortality, with special emphasis on the resurrection of Christ.

GUERANGER, Prosper. *The Liturgical Year*. Newman. 1948. 15 vols. \$4.00 per vol.

The classical work on the different prayers of the liturgical year developed by comparison between Eastern and Western liturgies with appropriate explanations and commentary.—HCK.

HEDLEY, G. P. *The Symbol of the Faith; a study of the Apostles' Creed*. Macmillan. 1948. \$2.50.

The various phrases of the Apostles' Creed become the subject matter of 14 chapters to which are added others of an interpretative nature and full scholarly notes.—DET.

JONES, E. S. *Mahatma Gandhi*. Abingdon. 1948. \$2.

Gandhi's powerful personality comes alive in these pages, and his principles and convictions are made understandable to Western man. The author who knew and loved Gandhi shows both the simplicity and complexity of Gandhi's character.—DET-HCK.

KELLER, J. G. *You Can Change the World; the Christopher Approach*. Longmans. 1948. \$3.

A personalized account of the Christopher movement which Father Keller originated and so ably interprets. The dynamic sincerity of the author is a fortification and inspiration to all men, Catholic and non-Catholic, who earnestly desire to put their religion to work.

KEPLER, T. S. ed. *Fellowship of the Saints*. Abingdon. 1948. \$7.50.

An anthology made up of selections from Christian devotional literature from the first century to the present day. Each selection is introduced by a biographical note.—EL.

LATOURETTE, K. S. *The Christian Outlook*. Harper. 1948. \$2.50.

A sober statement of the present position of the Christian faith in the entire world, written by one of the most distinguished historians. The book is marked by an atmosphere of great confidence, and we are told that we are living in the early days of the Christian faith.—DET.

LECOMTE DU NOUY, Pierre. *The Road to Reason*. Longmans. 1948. \$3.50.

A sympathetic interpretation of science in relation to religious feeling. Both the perils and riches of modern scientific thought are subject to critical analysis.

LESLIE, E. A. *The Psalms*. Abingdon. 1949. \$5.

Many years of extensive research have resulted in this modern English translation of the Psalms. There are abundant commentaries upon almost every line. The author's expositions are invariably illuminating and strike an original note.

MARITAIN, Jacques. *Existence and the Existent*. Pantheon. 1948. \$3.

A philosophical discussion of Catholic existentialism as related to the atheistic existentialism. Jean Paul Satre in particular is the target of Dr. Maritain's criticism.

MAVES, P. B. and CEDERLEAF, J. L. *Older People and the Church*. Abingdon. 1949. \$2.50.

A vigorous treatment of a basic area of religious adult education and pastoral responsibility. The authors advance the thesis that the Church has a particular responsibility for people over sixty. The material presented is based on careful research and well organized data.

MAY, H. F. *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*. Harper. 1949. \$3.50.

Essentially a presentation of the genesis and application of "the social Gospel" in the changing American scene. It would be well to read in connection with John F. Cronin's recent account, *Catholic Social Action*.

MERTON, Thomas. *Seven Storey Mountain*. Harcourt. 1948. \$3.

The autobiography of a Trappist monk. Some two-thirds of the book deals with the author's life before his conversion, but when the story is complete it is seen from the beginning as "the odyssey of a soul."—EL.

MORRISON, J. D. ed. *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*. Harper. 1948. \$5.

A comprehensive anthology of religious poetry consisting of 2020 poems from 900 different authors. The work is divided into seven sections: God, Jesus, Man, The Christian Life, Kingdom of God, The Nation and the Nations, Death and Immortality.

NEILL, T. P. *Makers of the Modern Mind*. Bruce. 1949. \$3.75.

A critical analysis of 11 men who have influenced contemporary concepts of man's relation to himself, his world and his God. The studies present Luther, Calvin, Descartes, Locke, Newton, Rousseau, Kant, Bentham, Darwin, Marx and Freud.

NIEBUHR, Reinhold. *Faith and History*. Scribner. 1949. \$3.50.

The relation between Christian faith and the historical process is subjected to Dr. Niebuhr's profound scrutiny. This volume includes lectures given to various academic audiences.

*Our Protestant Heritage*. Knox. 1948. \$3. When established forms of religion have be-

come meaningless, or, worse, have protected injustices, there have been movements of "protest." Incidents of "protest" in the heritage of the Christian religion are discussed by the faculty of Union Theological Seminary of Richmond, Va. The material is carefully assembled and ably presented.

OURSLER, Fulton. *Greatest Story Ever Told*. Doubleday. 1949. \$2.95.

The life of Christ is told in quite a new way, sometimes over-imaginatively, but always reverently, and with special reference to human needs in the modern world.—EL.

PEERS, E. A. *Behind that Wall*. Morehouse. 1948. \$2.50.

A brief introduction to 14 classical works on the interior life which will whet one's appetite for further reading. This series of informal talks will be especially welcomed by workers in religious education.

PETRY, R. C. *No Uncertain Sound*. Westminster. 1948. \$4.50.

Eloquent sermons from more than 30 pre-reformation preachers, many of them appearing for the first time in English. The pulpit tradition of the "undivided Church" is illustrated. The editor supplies a most illuminating introduction and the needed biographical notices.

SENCOURT, Robert. *Saint Paul: Envoy of Grace*. Sheed & Ward. 1948. \$3.50.

An appealing portrait of the inspired missionary Apostle written for laymen who desire reality without pedantry. Paul is dealt with as "one of the great writers of the world." The author keeps the numerous critical problems involved in his subject subservient to his main purpose to reveal Paul as the chief writer of the New Testament.

SHEEN, F. J. *Peace of Soul*. Whittlesey. 1949. \$3.

The way to "soul-peace" is different from the way to "mind-peace," more exacting and also more rewarding. Monsignor Sheen's Roman Catholicism is determinative of much that is said. The author writes a book for spiritual peace which will be of guidance to Catholics and non-Catholics.

STEEER, D. V. *Doors into Life*. Harper. 1948. \$2.

An understanding interpretation of five masterpieces of Christian devotional classics. The discussion brings the works into modern focus. The five classics are: The Imitation of Christ, The Introduction to the Devout Life, the Journal of John Woolman, Kierkegaard's Purity of Heart, and the Selected Letters of von Hugel.

*Theologica Germanica*. Ed. by Joseph Bernhart. Pantheon. 1949. \$2.50.

A new edition in the convenient form of a classic of mysticism. Joseph Bernhart supplies an interpretative introduction dealing with mysticism, especially that which characterizes the devotional classic.

THOMTE, Reidar. *Kierkegaard's Philosophy and Religion*. Princeton. 1948. \$3.50.

A serious and perceptive analysis of the religious thought of Kierkegaard.

THORNTON, F. B. *Return to Tradition*, a directive anthology. Bruce. 1948. \$8.50.

A comprehensive and thoroughly enjoyable anthology of that literature which is known as the Catholic Revival in England, Ireland, France and the United States. The book contains long extracts from the better-known modern Catholic writers, and from others not so well known, besides numerous shorter extracts and poems. Especially valuable for reference purposes. Each author introduced with a biographical sketch.

TILLICH, Paul. *Shaking of the Foundations*. Scribner. 1948. \$2.50.

A book of sermons by an eminent theologian of international contacts and sympathies and one who has felt in his own life the disturbances of our day. Christ is interpreted as being both the end of religion and above all religions, including Christianity.—DET.

TOYNBEE, A. J. *Civilization on Trial*. Oxford. 1948. \$3.50.

An excellent companion to the author's *Study of History*. The eminent historian recognizes spiritual forces at work in history and calls attention to instances of paradox and conflict.

WATSON, P. S. *Let God Be God, an Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther*. Muhlenberg. 1949. \$2.50.

Students of Luther tend either to excessive praise or to excessive condemnation. This work avoids both extremes, perhaps because it deals not with Luther's personal life and character so much as with his view of the Christian Gospel. The carefully documented book reveals a clear sense of the issues, and in this respect is one of the best of the numerous modern interpretations.—EL.

WHISTON, C. F. *Teach Us to Pray; a Study of Distinctively Christian Praying*. Pilgrim. 1949. \$2.50.

This could be called "Everyman's book of prayer." In clear and direct language the author tells what prayer is, why it is so necessary, its different forms, and the means to facilitate its practice.

WILSON, P. W. *General Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army*. Scribner. 1948. \$3.50.

The personality and career of Evangeline Booth is unveiled by an ardent admirer and in this accomplishment the history of the Salvation Army is told.—HCK.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. *Man's Disorder and God's Design*. The Amsterdam Assembly Series. Harper. 1948. \$5.

The Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches brought together Christian leaders from the Christian world (with the exception of Roman Catholic). The papers prepared for the occasion are presented in four volumes. This is an omnibus of those four volumes. It is regrettable that the publishers did not re-edit the work, providing consecutive paging and a complete index. Omitted also is vol. V, the official report of the Assembly.