
Pro Rege

Volume 5 | Number 2

Article 5

December 1976

Twelve Baskets of Crumbs (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Meeter, Merle (1976) "Twelve Baskets of Crumbs (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 5: No. 2, 29 - 30.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol5/iss2/5

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Book Reviews

by John M. Zinkand

Note: Mr. Evert Van Der Heide, Instructor of Economics, was the author of the book review on Aid for the Overdeveloped West published in the September, 1976 issue of Pro Rege.

Twelve Baskets of Crumbs, by Elisabeth Elliot, Christian Herald House (40 Overlook Drive, Chappaqua, New York 10514), 1976, 173 pages, \$6.95. Reviewed by Merle Meeter, Associate Professor of English.

Elisabeth Elliot is well known to Christian readers for her biographical-experiential books Shadow of the Almighty, Through Gates of Splendor, The Savage, My Kinsman, and These Strange Ashes. Her single novel, No Graven Image, deserves to be more widely read and should be republished in paperback. Betty Elliot is a versatile and eloquent writer.

The twenty-five essays in this volume are listed under the headings "Our Lives Together," "To Learn and to Teach," and "Risk and Service." In them, she presents from her own rich experience and perspective (for example, Mrs. Elliot was twice widowed: Jim Elliot speared by the Aucas and Addison Leitch dying of cancer), her Biblically-based insights into many human situations and sins. Of her

work with the Aucas, for instance, she observes: "All of us, I saw (and tried to show in the photographs) were created by the same God, all of us broken by the same Fall, and all of us might be redeemed by the same Grace."

"Tyrannies and Victories" opens a batch of old newspaper clippings, and quotes C. S. Lewis on change versus routine, concluding that "We need not be always seeking something other, out of mere restlessness. There are enough changes we cannot stop, which are of the essence of this life and are meant to be. They are meant to drive us to God."

"How to Be Free" presents our freedom in Christ and offers Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a man who

epitomized true freedom in his acceptance, for God's sake, of the prison cell and death, [and who] wrote: "If you set out to seek freedom, then learn above all things to govern your soul and your senses.... Only through discipline may a man learn to be free."

A wonderfully evocative essay on a New Hampshire cottage, "All That Was Ever Ours," is a Christian chapter for Thoreau's Walden, a Christ-believer's alternative to the romantic despair of E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake." Then there is the essay "Boredom," which demonstrates how God's gifts of grace

and work can overcome self-pity, complaint, and depression.

"Truth-telling" urges us to give the encouraging compliment now, at the time it is deserved; " 'M' Is for a Merry Heart" is a light and loving tribute to the author's mother, Katherine Howard; "The Shock of Self-Recognition" mocks our egocentric severity and reminds us of the joy, forgiveness, and refreshment of the Resurrection; and "Housework and High-flown Ideas" is the best brief rejoinder to the stridency of feminist extremism that I have read. Elliot's strongest argument is the testimony and example of her own life; she ends her answer by affirming

Strange that I have no wish to do it over again the Hardesty-Scanzoni way. Strange that my memories of marriage are such happy ones and that I want to live out the rest of my life as a woman, even a single one, without the chips on my shoulder that certain feminists are trying to persuade me to carry.

I am not half through the volume with my comments, but I recommend that you read also, and especially, "In a Hospital Waiting Room," the title essay, "Twelve Baskets of Crumbs," "Confessions of a Teacher," "Some of My Best Friends Are Books," "Speaking and Thinking" (on "The Care and Feeding of Public Speakers"), "What About the Aucas?" and "A Modern Pastoral." Elisabeth Elliot is a pre-eminent contemporary literary artist, and she writes out of the Scriptural vision of the Sovereignty of the Covenant God and the Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ over every aspect of our lives, human history, and His universe.

An Introduction to Christian Economics, by Gary North, the Craig Press, 1975, 413 pages, \$6.50. Reviewed by Evert Van Der Heide, Instructor in Economics.

The Christian who is concerned with integrating the various segments of life with his Christian perspective would, no doubt, be expecting a great deal from this book. He would be looking for direction as to what economic areas should be of particular concern for the Christian and ways in which to incorporate peculiar Christian attitudes. But I'm afraid that the reader would be somewhat disappointed. While the author does view certain economic problems as particularly relevant to the Christian, he fails to convince the

reader that what he does is significant. Several of his arguments are noticeably weak. North's underlying concern is to argue in favor of the "free enterprise" system and against government on a Biblical basis. This theme comes out in almost every chapter.

The book is best seen as consisting of two parts (although it is divided into four). First, North deals with problems of money and monetary theory. The major problem is the problem of inflation. The entire section rests on the beginning assumption that inflation is immoral. North interprets Isaiah 1:22 ("Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water") to be a commandment by God against inflation. This is contrary to the exegesis of most Bible scholars who interpret the verse in the spiritual sense. North recognizes the difference and makes an argument for a "physical" interpretation, but his proof is far from conclusive. Since this is the beginning assumption of the section on money, the remainder of his arguments are substantially diluted. (North admits that the validity of his remarks on money rest on this assumption.)

The author is concerned with the system of money creation as one of deception and possible ruin. A fractional reserve system implies that bank depositors could not all be satisfied with funds if all were to seek to withdraw their money simultaneously. In addition (and more importantly), the quantity of money in circulation is determined by government. And since government has been causing inflation through increases in the money supply, the citizenry has been deceived. For North, the deception is less significant than the existence of an immoral inflation.

The second section of the book deals with problems which are more interesting, such as the economics of women's liberation, property taxes, urban renewal, and financing the Kingdom of God. Given that all of earth's resources belong ultimately to our Heavenly Father, the Christian's response must be one of responsibility and stewardship. North, therefore, spends his time arguing for the most efficient techniques of resource distribution, namely, the free market system. In every chapter he demonstrates how intervention by government, through laws and regulations, causes misallocation of resources.

North, it would seem, makes a mistake by focusing exclusively on this task of striving for efficiency. While it is refreshing to see a Christian writer knowledgeable in economics, it is disheartening to see the lack of concern for responsibility in social relationships. We must be concerned with equity considerations as well