

The Creative Gift. Essays on Art and the Christian Life,
H.R. J Rookmaker, Cornerstone Books, 1981: hc., 172 pp.,

Dr. Rookmaker noticed that before the 18th century, easy-chairs were never made, not even for the very rich. Why do we have easy-chairs today? They are not feats of modern technology. Mankind could have made them in the distant past...but nobody did. He notes that: "The easy chair is the result of a new mentality that demands all ease and comfort now."

This collection of some of Rookmaker's essays will deeply disturb the "easy-chair mentality." Christians have too often made their faith into "a happiness system, guaranteeing success the easy way, with God there in his power to fill the gaps."

Rookmaker paints a gloomy and frightening picture of our western civilization. He views our era as a "spiritual wasteland." In the midst of the death-throes of our culture, Rookmaker calls us to return to the God of the Bible. Our work and calling have an important role in the immense drama and tribulation of our times. Our task is not to change the world, "but primarily to keep the world from decay and corruption, evil and suppression." We must continue to work for a Christian culture. "Christian culture," he writes, "is not something special or sacred with a kind of halo around it. On the contrary, it means nothing more, and nothing less, than the building of a civilization within the structures, laws and norms given by God."

In our confused age, Rookmaker has spoken with clarity and prophetic insight. His untimely death has left a great gap in the ranks of Christian scholars, authors and critics of our culture. I hope that these essays, which were completed shortly before his death, will be carefully read and studied. They ought to be read by every Christian. Just the chapter, "Communicating the Gospel to Modern Man " alone makes the book a worthwhile purchase. Rookmaker wrote from his personal experiences in introducing young men and women to Christ at L'Abri through his lectures, seminars and his enormous correspondence with seekers for truth and with troubled souls generally. May Rookmaker's works continue to stir hearts and minds for many years to come!

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