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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review — Literatur

Full Assurance. By H. A. Ironside. The Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, Ill. 127 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, 75 cts.

The Cross of Christ. By George P. Pierson. American Tract Society, New York. 173 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

The Christian Evangel. By John McNicol. American Tract Society, New York. 193 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

Of these three books, written from the fundamentalist viewpoint, the first is by far the best, in fact, the only one that we can recommend to our pastors. Dr. Ironside's purpose is to give full assurance of salvation to all believers. While a Lutheran would have stressed some points overlooked by the author, there is a truly Biblical, therefore Lutheran, ring to such passages as the following: "Confidence based upon an emotional experience would leave one in utter bewilderment when that emotion passed away. But assurance based upon the Word of God abides, because that Word is unchangeable." (P. 42.) "Faith rests on the naked Word of God." (P. 46.) "No Christian can afford to neglect his Bible. If he does, he will be stunted and dwarfed in his spiritual growth and will be a prey to doubts and fears and may be carried about by every wind of doctrine." (P. 48.) "It is not faith that saves the soul. It is the One whom God has set forth as the object of faith. It is true, we are justified by faith instrumentally, but actually we are justified by His blood. The weakest faith in Jesus saves. The strongest faith in self, or in good works, or in the Church, or in its ordinances leaves you lost and undone still." (P. 108.) On the other hand, the Reformed errors are evident. "God claims one-seventh of man's time." (P. 111.) Baptism is a "figure of salvation." (P. 118.) "Predestination means that some day all the redeemed shall become just like the Lord Jesus." (P. 94.) How does that agree with page 92, where we read: "We are never told that Christ died for the elect. But what does the Word say? 'Christ died for the ungodly.' Are you ungodly? Then He died for you. Put in your claim and enter into peace"? On page 92 the author follows the Bible; on page 94, his teacher, Calvin. In spite of these and other flaws, which the discerning eye will discover, we can recommend the book to our pastors.

Fundamentalism of an entirely different type is represented by the authors of the other two books. While theoretically basing their presentation on the Bible (McNicol offers a "Scriptural Index" covering seven pages), and while teaching the fundamentals of the Christian religion, these two books breathe the spirit of Calvin, their approach to the Bible is frequently that of rationalizing theologians, and moreover, sad to say, the Cross of Christ is viewed and the Christian Evangel is presented from the standpoint of millennialism and dispensationalism, which obscures the brightness of the Cross and beclouds its glorious message. Our expectations raised by the beautiful titles were sadly disappointed on reading the contents.

THEO. LAETSCH

The Triune God. By C. Norman Bartlett, S. T. D., professor in the National Bible Institute of New York. American Tract Society, New York. 194 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

About the Old Faith. The Important Truths of the Christian Faith. By Henry W. Frost. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. 128 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.25.

These two popular theological works demonstrate the newly awakened interest of large numbers in the Christian faith, which now is being studied with new vigor after Modernism has proved its utter futility to provide anything that satisfies the religious cravings of men. The pendulum is swinging back to the right, and books setting forth the old faith are again being published and read. The first volume presents in simple language the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; but the author does not throughout adhere to the Biblical teachings on the Trinity. The book is in fact full of errors, and big ones at that, such as subordinationism, kenoticism, etc. The author speaks of the "necessitation of the Trinity," which, if duly pressed, presupposes a pantheistic view of God. He unduly limits the Father when he declares that God in Christ is omnipresent in the universe through the Holy Spirit. He holds that all three persons participated in the incarnation, though Scripture teaches the very opposite. In short, the volume is not a safe guide, and we regret that the American Tract Society has lent it its prestige and backing; for many who hope to find the true doctrine of the Holy Trinity in it will be deceived. Perhaps the outstanding fault of the monograph is that it does not furnish Scripture proof for its several views, but demands that its readers receive them as true upon the mere statement of the author.—Frost's *About the Old Faith* is a popular presentation of the chief teachings of the Christian faith adapted to the comprehension of the youthful reader. Unfortunately it, too, contains many false teachings. The doctrine regarding the Sacraments is utterly inadequate in its treatment and very misleading. The writer holds that "evolution is an undeniable fact," though he means theistic evolution, which, however, is as little of a fact as is atheistic evolution. Very strongly he urges millennialism and dispensationalism and with it hosts of other errors and inaccuracies. He believes that demons are not fallen angels, but belong in a class by themselves. Were they evil *ab ortu*? "No," answers the author, for God created all creatures good. But why, then, are they not fallen angels? He does not say. He knows various ends of the world: the end of the present age, the end of the millennial age. Hence it is very apparent that also Frost's *About the Old Faith* is not a safe guide for our American youth; for much of what it contains is not Scripture doctrine, but vain speculation, which has its source in the ignorant reason of man.

J. T. MUELLER

Der Dienst der Kirche an der heutigen Menschheit. Anregungen zum Nachdenken für die christlichen Weltkonferenzen 1937 und 1938. Von Prof. D. Julius Richter. Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh. 115 Seiten 6×9. Preis, kartoniert: M. 3.

D. Richter, „der seit einem Menschenalter im internationalen Missionsleben steht und sich mit den Führern der meisten evangelischen Länder in Freundschaft

verbunden weiß, will in diesem Büchlein unter dem Gesichtspunkt Kirche, Staat und Volk die derzeitige Lage der evangelischen Kirche auf dem Erdenrund sachlich darstellen und einem weiteren Kreis nachdenklicher Leser die großen und mannigfachen Probleme der heutigen Weltlage nahebringen“. Er charakterisiert die verschiedenen Weltreligionen, die verschiedenen Systeme der Philosophie (wir lesen da: „Welche Antworten geben die Philosophien auf die drei großen Lebensrätsel Zufall, Tod und Gewissen? Nach einem jahrhundertelangen, angestrengten, oft leidenschaftlichen Forschen nach einer soliden philosophischen Weltanschauung hat unser Geschlecht den Versuch in Verzweiflung fast aufgegeben“, S. 24), die verschiedenen Völker und deren Regierungsformen, untersucht die Begriffe Volkstum, Rasse (wir lesen da: „Von Ewigkeit und Reinheit irgendwelcher Rassen kann man also nur in rhetorischer Übertreibung reden; denn selbst die 50 Prozent Nordiker in Deutschland bestehen schon aus zwei Rassen“ usw., S. 87), das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat (wir lesen da: „Eine Trennung von Kirche und Staat will in kirchlichen Kreisen niemand; aber jeder ist entschlossen, diesen schweren Weg zu gehen, wenn er glaubt, sich überzeugen zu müssen, daß nur auf diesem Wege das reine Evangelium zu erhalten ist.“ — „Hier sind neue Grenzregulierungen erforderlich, und sie müssen von beiden Seiten (von Kirche und Staat) unter ehrlischer Anerkennung ihres Eigenrechtes gesucht werden“, S. 76—79) und die spezifischen Probleme der Missionspraxis — das alles unter dem Gesichtspunkt des von Gott der Kirche auferlegten Dienstes an der heutigen Menschheit. Es finden sich hier viele treffliche Erörterungen. Der theologische Standpunkt Richters ist aber der modern-positiv. Und die modern-positiv Richtung verbietet unter anderm, in betreff der Lehrunterschiede eine positive Stellung zu nehmen. So weht in unserm Büchlein der unionistische Geist. Wir treffen sogar auf diesen Ausspruch: „Das Verhältnis von Christentum und Islam ist von Anfang an unfreundlich gewesen. Die beiden Religionen sind nahe Verwandte, und, wie so oft, ist der Haß zwischen Geschwistern am bittersten.“ (S. 35.) Der unionistischen Anschauung entspringen auch diese Gedanken: „Die una sancta hat nie existiert.“ Wir müssen darum „um die Vollendung der una sancta, der einen heiligen allgemeinen Kirche“, ringen“. „In der Theologie der Reformationskirchen ist Gewicht auf den Unterschied der sichtbaren und der unsichtbaren Kirche gelegt. Praktisch ist mit jenem Unterschied nicht viel anzufangen.“ (S. 57—67.) Wer nicht an die Unsichtbarkeit der Kirche glaubt, wird die Einheit und Einigkeit — die ja ein Attribut der heiligen christlichen Kirche ist — auf unionistischem Wege herzustellen suchen. Der modern-positiv Theolog hat bekanntlich auch der Lehre von der wörtlichen Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift abgesagt. So redet auch D. Richter von „einer so zufällig zusammengewürfelten Sammlung der neutestamentlichen Schriften“, entstanden aus „den Glaubensüberzeugungen der apostolischen Gemeinden“, davon, daß „die Jubenchristen der heidenschristlichen Kirche das fast ausschließlich von ihnen geschriebene Neue Testament übermacht haben“ und daß „das Alte Testament die Literaturgeschichte des israelitisch-jüdischen Volkes in sehr verschiedener religiöser Höhenlage ist.“ (S. 44. 46. 57.)

I. h. Engelder

Natürliche Theologie und theokratische Schwärmerei bei Melancthon. Von Friedrich Hübner, Pastor, lic. theol. Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh. 1936. 152 Seiten 6½×9½. Preis, kartoniert: M. 4.50.

In dieser Schrift — einer unter der Leitung Werner Cletis geschriebenen Dissertation — wird untersucht, ob und inwieweit die Theologie des natürlichen

Menschen — die Theologie der Vernunft und des Gesetzes — die Theologie Melancthon's beeinflusst hat. „Von einer natürlichen Theologie rationaler Art, von einer apologetischen Verkürzung der Heilsbotschaft des Evangeliums kann bei Melancthon nicht geredet werden“ (S. 74. 121. 142). Jedoch „scheint Melancthon die Heilige Schrift und ihren Lehrgehalt durch vernünftige Erwägungen stützen und sichern zu wollen“. Er gebraucht z. B. Argumente der Apologetik, „ut firmissima assensione doctrinam ecclesiae amplectamur“ (S. 11 f.). — Ferner, finden sich bei Melancthon Ansätze zur „theokratischen Schwärmerci“? „Auf Grund der mittelalterlichen theokratischen Gedankengänge bahnte sich auch bei Melancthon eine ähnliche Ausweitung des Kirchenbegriffes an. Staat und Kirche blieben zwar immer reguliert nebeneinander. Aber im Grunde war der Staat um der Kirche willen da und empfing von ihr seine Pflichten“ (S. 110). Unter „theokratischer Schwärmerci“ versteht aber Lic. Häbner auch dieses, „daß man aus dem Glauben ein Schauen machen möchte“ (S. 7), und dieses Bemühen ist nichts anderes als ein Ausfluß der „natürlichen Theologie“. In dieser Verbindung kommt der Synergismus Melancthon's zur Sprache (S. 131—135). „Die Lehre vom freien Willen war möglich geworden durch das Dogma, daß in Gott keine widersprechenden Willen angenommen werden dürfen“ (diesen einleitenden Satz würden wir etwas anders formulieren), „Cum promissio sit universalis nec sint in Deo contradictoriae voluntates, necesse est in nobis esse aliquam discriminis causam, cur Saul abiciatur, David recipiatur; id est, necesse est aliquam esse actionem dissimilem in his duobus“. Hier wird aus dem evangelischen Aspekt des gnädigen Gottes, an dessen Verheißungen wir uns zu halten haben, die logische Folgerung gezogen, daß . . . im Menschen selbst ein Grund für seine Verdammung oder Errettung liegen muß. Das nennen wir Synergismus.“ „Darum kann auch die von Luther so leidenschaftlich angegriffene Definition des Erasmus gebilligt werden: „Liberum arbitrium in homine facultatem esse applicandi se ad gratiam, id est, audit promissionem et assentiri conatur et abiicit peccata contra conscientiam.“ . . . Alle von uns bei Melancthon als gefährlich ange deuteten Punkte sind in Art. II der Formula Concordiae zur Sprache gekommen und entweder verworfen oder richtiggestellt worden. Melancthon entging nur mit Not der namentlichen Nennung als synergistischer Irrlehrer.“ Auch über den Wert der Apologetik, das Verhältnis der Philosophie und Vernunft zur Theologie und die Vermischung von Kirche und Staat bietet diese Schrift wertvolle Erörterungen.

Th. Engelder

Varieties of Christian Experience. By Sverre Norborg. Published by Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 289 pages, 6x8 $\frac{1}{4}$. Price, \$2.50.

Dr. Sverre Norborg is a lecturer at the University of Minnesota and a member of the faculty of Augsburg Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, Minn. He is a brilliant student in the field of the philosophy of religion and a forceful writer. The present series of lectures represents, in effect, a review of *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James, which, thirty-five years ago, caused such a great stir in academic circles. The author, according to his own thesis, raises the problem of the *psychic uniqueness* of Christian experience and attempts to show the definite difference between Christian faith and Christian experience. (*Italics those of the author.*) The study is certainly thorough, taking

up all the questions which at the present time are agitating the minds of men with reference to psychology and personality, the Christian experience, the reality of God, and various pathological aspects connected with the religious life of people. The author makes an analysis of human personality and behavior along scientific lines, with frequent reference to statements taken from the Bible. Some of his sentences are truly epigrammatic, as when he states: "Scientifically, this means the end of the myth of mechanistic evolutionism, the fancy of mechanistic biology and psychology." (P. 44.) "We shall meet the Freudian and pseudo-Freudian libertinists with a firm protest against their materialistic dogmatism, their unrealistic, inflamed sensualism, their immoral lack of ethical challenge and norms." (P. 65.) There are many searching statements and questions pertaining to the work of the pastor in his cure of souls, which alone ought to induce many pastors to study the book. But we cannot agree with the author in his evident admiration for Karl Barth; for he was not the rediscoverer of Luther's real theology. Nor can we follow the author in his insistence on making conversion a long-drawn-out affair, unless he definitely includes the antecedent acts of God's providence. Conversion, in the strict Biblical sense of the term, is always instantaneous, a change from darkness to light, from death to life. Cp. CONCORDIA THEOL. MONTHLY, I, 561—570. 804—810. P. E. KRETZMANN

The Creed of Jesus. A Study of the Pearl of Prayers. By George Dorn. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 111 pages, 6×9. Price, \$1.00. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Dorn is pastor of the Hollywood Lutheran Church (U. L. C. A.), Hollywood, Cal., and these addresses expounding the Lord's Prayer are a direct outgrowth of his parish work. The title may seem somewhat strange, and the author says concerning it: "The title *The Creed of Jesus* may seem a little out of place when applied to Jesus. These few brief sentences give us a marvelous insight into His philosophy of life. It is therefore peculiarly appropriate to use this title. It is doctrinally all-comprehensive." (P. 4.) Since every pastor is obliged to deal with the Lord's Prayer so frequently in his catechetical work, in sermons, and in pastoral administrations, he will welcome every exposition of it that may give him further thoughts and keep him from going stale. This treatment will be of value, chiefly because of its many new viewpoints, many of which were suggested by Luther's Large Catechism. Only rarely will the reader find reasons to disagree with the author, as when he states (p. 51): "The way to the millennium is along the path of obedience." The printing and binding of the book are neatly done.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Concerning the Ministry. By John Oman. Harper & Brothers, New York. 180 pages, 5¾×8¾. Price, \$2.25.

This book, in twenty-two chapters, covers a wide field of a minister's work. It says many good things in a good way. Much in the book makes real worth-while reading. Any pastor will be benefited by it. The author's style is unique but attractive. It is well that the book contains little theology, for its theology is bad.

J. H. C. FRITZ

When Death Speaks. Ten Meditations on the Life Eternal. By H. Reed Shepfer. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 103 pages, 6×9. Price, \$1.00. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

The author of these addresses is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church (U. L. C. A.), Rochester, Pa., and these messages were delivered in his own work. Their titles are significant: *When Death Speaks; How Jesus Faced Death; What Is Death?; When Jesus Spoke of Death; Our Hope of Immortality; When Shadows Fall; Faith which Waits; Adventuring with God; At Eventide There Shall Be Light; Recognition in Heaven.* The addresses are not expository, the texts being usually one or more brief statements of Scripture; but they are truly devotional and evangelical, with many quotations from the Church's treasures of hymnody. The pastor who has many funeral sermons to preach will find these addresses very stimulating.

P. E. KREZMANN

Personal Christianity. By W. T. Conner, Ph. D., D. D., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 101 pages, 5¼×8½. Price, \$1.00.

Dr. Conner is professor of Systematic Theology in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Seminary Hill, Tex., and is definitely a Fundamentalist in his theology. The fourteen addresses here offered are thoroughly evangelical, even if the texts are usually so brief as to preclude expository work. There is no effort at oratory, but every address presents some Scriptural truth in a simple way, with clear illustrations and definite applications. This is seen even from a list of the subjects treated: *Faith in God; Repentance; Jesus the Bread of Life; The Vision of Faith; What Is Prayer?; Praying in the Name of Jesus; Assurance of Salvation; The Sealing of the Spirit; The Christian's Ideal; The Urgency of Life's Mission; Paul's Master Passion; The Supreme Good; Paul's Cure for Worry; The Power of the Spirit.* A few statements in the book seem to point to Arminian thinking, as when the author says (p. 70): "God gives righteousness of character, but He gives it only to those who are willing to go through fire to attain it." If a Lutheran pastor desires a sample of good evangelical preaching in another denomination, this book will give him the information.

P. E. KREZMANN

Jewels of Promise. By W. M. Seay, D. D., Th. D. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 151 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

The Rev. W. M. Seay is pastor of a Baptist church in South Carolina, and he as well as the Broadman Press belong to the Southern Baptist Convention. These facts explain the religious background of *Jewels of Promise*, which present eighteen brief sermons of a devotional nature, based upon Scripture-texts that hold out special divine promises to God's saints, e. g., the "Promise of Cleansing from all Sin," the "Promise of Satan's Defeat," the "Promise of the Comforter." The author himself describes the purpose of the book when he says: "These sermons, taken for the most part from the Psalms, are an earnest attempt to apply in the name of Christ 'the balm of Gilead' to wounded and stricken souls and to comfort the people of God." We see in this book, with its simple

Christian faith so nobly stressed, a new proof of the power of the divine Word to preserve faith in times of rationalism and atheism; for only sincere Christians can write, or demand for study, such books as *Jewels of Promise*.

J. T. MUELLER

Heaven. By George Beiderwieden. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1937. 32 pages. Price, 25 cts.

A beautiful booklet, giving Scriptural answer to the questions: What is heaven? Where is heaven? What kind of place is heaven? Who is in heaven? Will our bodies be in heaven? What kind of bodies shall we have in heaven? Shall we know one another in heaven? Will there be any evil in heaven? What are the outstanding joys in heaven? How do we get to heaven? What is meant by the degrees and differences in heaven?—It will be welcomed by pastors, who may use it or recommend it as a gift to those who mourn the loss of a loved one.

THEO. HOYER

Daily Food for Christians. For every day of the year. A. J. Holman Co., Philadelphia, Pa. 192 pages, 5×2¾. In red, blue, brown, and black leather bindings. Price, 50 cts.

This little book of daily devotions is small enough to be carried in a vest-pocket or ladies' purse. It contains a suitable Bible-passage, a hymn-verse, and a closing Bible-passage; one set of these for every day of the year, from January 1 to December 31. Though the selections stand in no relation to the ecclesiastical year, except incidentally, they seem to be well chosen and are excellent seed-grains for profitable daily meditations.

W. G. POLACK

The Psychology of Dealing with People. By Wendell White, Ph. D. The Macmillan Company, New York. 256 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$2.50. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

No pastor can learn too well the art of dealing with people, of studying their personalities and characteristics, and of practising true leadership. The understanding and tactfulness which are required for this part of pastoral work are very ably discussed in this book, although it is intended for leaders in various professions. The book is very practical throughout, the author suggesting dozens of statements which may be used in approaching others for the sake of enlisting their cooperation in any cause. Some of the chapters are truly fascinating, as the headings show: Presenting One's Ideas Indirectly; Designating an Act as Creditable or Discreditable; Removing Objectionable Ideas Inoffensively; Preventing Wrong-doing; Preventing Peculiar Behavior; Furthering Mental Health. The book will prove most profitable reading, and we venture to say most men who read it once will want to study it more thoroughly.

P. E. KRETZMANN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From the W. A. Wilde Company, Boston, Mass.:

The Christian Gentleman. By William H. Ridgway. 143 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.25.

From the Abingdon Press, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago:

The Laughing Valley and Other Story Sermons for Children. By Virginia Greene Milliken. 202 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

What Jesus Means to Me. By Raymond Calkins. 53 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, 35 cts.

Rule of the Road. By Anne Byrd Payson. 244 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

The Art of Living. By Norman Vincent Peale. 144 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, London, and Edinburgh:

Children's Everyland Story-Sermons. By Hugh Thomson Kerr. 185 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

From Harper & Brothers, New York:

Fraternal Sermons and Addresses. By G. B. F. Hallock, D. D. 259 pages, 5×7½.

Die Monatschrift „Luthertum“ bringt in der Juninummer einen sehr anregenden Artikel von D. Hermann Steinlein-Ausbach über das Thema „Luther und das Alte Testament“, den man wirklich mit Genuß liest. Dieser Artikel kommt in der Julinummer zum Abschluß. Andere Artikel in der Juninummer sind „Kirche, Volk und Staat“ von D. Theophil Beher und die Randbemerkungen von D. Hans Schomerus. Im Juliheft ist ein Artikel, „Unsere Gemeinden und die Kirchengeschichte“ von Lic. Otto Aukt-Breslau, wertvoll wegen der praktischen Winke, die darin enthalten sind. Heft 6 der „Theologie der Gegenwart“ bespricht Neuererscheinungen auf dem Gebiet der Religionsgeschichte und der äußeren Mission.

Die Augustnummer von Luthertum bringt einen längeren Artikel von D. Erdmann Schott-Greifswald über „Kirchenleitung nach evangelischem Verständnis“, der sich auch bemüht, die theologische Bedeutung dieser Frage in den Vordergrund zu stellen. Hans Lauerer-Neuenbetselsau behandelt „Jesu Stellung zu den menschlichen Gemeinschaften“. Das Juli-Augustheft von Theologie der Gegenwart behandelt Neuererscheinungen auf dem Gebiete des Alten Testaments.

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