

8-1-1938

Book Review. - Literatur

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Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1938) "Book Review. - Literatur," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 9 , Article 58.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol9/iss1/58>

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Book Review — Literatur

Notes on the Gospel of Mark, Explanatory and Practical. By Albert Barnes, Author of *Notes on the Psalms, Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity*, etc. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 119 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Barnes's *Notes on the New Testament* have ever since their appearance, many years ago, been in favor with students of the Scriptures on account of the informative character of the comments and their reverent tone. For a number of years the work has been out of print. Conservative readers of the Bible will welcome it that at least one of the volumes has now been reissued. The Bible text is printed in full, and the comments are given on the lower part of the page. The doctrinal point of view is that of Reformed theology, as is borne out in this volume, for instance, by what is stated on the Sabbath (p. 22): "The Sabbath was therefore preeminently intended for man's welfare, and the best interests of mankind demand that it should be sacredly regarded as an appointment of merciful Heaven intended for our best good and, where improved aright, infallibly resulting in our temporal and eternal peace." It ought to be stated for the information of those who intend to buy this work that frequently where passages in Mark are like the corresponding ones in Matthew, no comments are given, but the reader is simply referred to the interpretation submitted in the volume on Matthew.

W. ARNDT

The Church of the Living Lord. A Practical Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. By K. O. Lundeberg. Augsburg Publishing House. 177 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

As the subtitle states, this is a practical commentary, although planned along scientific lines and based on the original Greek. Generally speaking, the exposition, though brief, is adequate for all ordinary work in sermon-making and Bible class. And it will certainly serve for edification. However, the reader of this book ought to keep the following points in mind. The historical or chronological order of Paul's epistles, as given on page XV f., can hardly be accepted in the light of recent research in the epistles of Paul. The exposition of chap. 1:4, 5 leaves much to be desired, since the author attempts to find here, as in Rom. 8:29 and 1 Pet. 1:1, 2, the *intuitu fidei*. (P. 10.) As for other suggestions, the word "unsaved" (p. 41) seems to imply a doubt or a denial of objective justification. In chapter 2:21, p. 68, the translation "the whole building" is altogether in conformity with New Testament usage. The apostle is evidently referring to the *una sancta*, not to the several congregations. On page 100 the author overlooked the fact that Matthias, according to Acts 1, was chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot. With regard to "pastors and teachers" we believe that Stoeckhardt gave the better explanation, when he spoke of two different functions of the ministry. But when these exceptions have been noted, a pastor will be able to derive a great deal of benefit from the study of this book.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Paulus und das Gebet. Von Pfarrer Lic. Dr. Günther Harder, Fehr-Berlin. Neutestamentliche Forschungen, herausgegeben von Prof. D. Otto Schmitz. Erste Reihe: „Paulusstudien.“ Zehntes Heft. Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh. 1936. 228 Seiten 6x9. Preis: RM. 6.

Hier haben wir wiederum eine reichhaltige Studie, aus der man ungemein viel lernen kann. In vier Abschnitten wird das gewaltige Material bearbeitet: I. Der Jude Paulus und das Gebet; II. Der antike Mensch und das Gebet; III. Der Christ Paulus und das Gebet; IV. Rückblick. Es folgen dann noch ein Verzeichnis der häufiger zitierten Literatur, ein Register griechischer Wörter und ein Stellenregister. Der Verfasser arbeitet fast immer mit dem Grundtext der Schriften, auf die er sich bezieht, so daß wir hier, besonders in den Fußnoten, viele griechische und auch nicht wenige hebräische Zitate antreffen. Der erste Abschnitt, wo das Material zusammengetragen ist, das an Pauli jüdische Abkunft erinnert, wenn er vom Gebet redet, ist reich an Parallelen aus dem Alten Testament und anderer jüdischer Literatur. Im zweiten Teil wird uns die Hilflosigkeit des Heidentums vorgeführt und durch Literaturhinweise illustriert. Die schwere Stelle 1 Kor. 11, 10 („Darum soll das Weib eine Macht auf dem Haupt haben um der Engel willen“) wird wie folgt erklärt: „Unter Engel versteht Paulus durchschnittlich die Herren der Schöpfung, die zwischen Gott und die Schöpfung treten, die von Gott trennen wollen und denen die Schöpfung seufzend unterworfen ist. ‚Wegen der Engel‘ heißt also in unserm Zusammenhang: wegen der Mächte, denen die Schöpfung, somit auch das Weib, unterworfen ist.“ „Die Macht auf dem Haupt“ soll sich auf Schleier oder jüdische Haartracht beziehen. (S. 157.) Die Erklärung ist nicht gerade lichtvoll. Im dritten Abschnitt werden dann die großen Stellen besprochen, in denen der Apostel vom Gebet handelt, besonders Röm. 8. Daß der Epheserbrief dem Apostel Paulus abgesprochen wird und daß die sogenannte Devotion (1 Kor. 5, 5) als aus hellenistischem Brauche stammend angesehen wird, sind Sachen, die wir tadeln müssen. B. Arndt

Here We Stand. The Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith. By the Rev. Prof. H. Sasse, Th. D., Erlangen. Translated, with Revisions and Additions from the Second German Edition (*Was heisst lutherisch?* 1934; 1936) by Theodore G. Tappert, Professor of Church History, U. L. C. Theological Seminary at Mount Airy. Harper & Brothers, New York. 183 pages, 6x8½. Price, \$2.00. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Sasse's popular book *Was heisst lutherisch?* is here offered in a revised, enlarged, and thoroughly Americanized edition for special study by the various American church groups, Lutheran and non-Lutheran. Thanks are due for this venture to Dr. M. Reu for suggesting to the National Lutheran Council Sasse's work as the second of prominent modern Lutheran publications to be presented to the English-speaking theological world in an appropriate form; to the National Lutheran Council for letting this new book follow so soon upon Koeberle's *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, which proved of such great value to many in American theological circles; to Dr. Theodore Tappert for his fine translation of a rather difficult German text and his editorial supplementations; to Harper & Brothers for their excellent mechanical equipment of

the new book (hardly any *errata*; cf. only p.166, footnote; and p.110: "Reformer" for "Reformed"); and, last but not least, to Dr. Sasse himself for his laudable spirit of cooperation and ready response. The book is indeed timely and important, since it declares clearly and unmistakably what it means to be Lutheran. (We regret that the original title was not retained in the American edition, for, while the new title *Here We Stand* is very attractive, it does not sufficiently describe the character of the book.) It deserves careful study from beginning to end, including the helpful Table of Contents, the Translator's Note, and the special Foreword to the American Edition, the latter written by Dr. Sasse. The following is an attempt at sketching the leading thoughts in the book: "Today, since Lutheran confessionalism in Germany is again making itself felt in aggressive *Bekennnisgruppen*, the question is raised 'What does it mean to be Lutheran?' Does it mean merely to represent a distinctive school or trend in evangelical Germany, or does it mean something radically different from the evangelical German union groups?" The answer to these queries will be given as we study the Lutheran Reformation in its own truthful representation of itself. As we do so, we must reject the heroic interpretation of the Reformation (for Luther was not essentially a national German hero), the culture-historical interpretation (for the Reformation was not merely a stage in our advancing culture), and the nationalistic interpretation (for it was not a mere incident in the development of the national history of Germany). The Reformation was rather a divinely directed episode in church history, a true reformation of the Church, which restored to Christendom not merely the *sola Scriptura* but what is more, the *sola fide*, the heart of the Christian religion. It was "the revival of the preaching of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake," a "renovation of the Church brought about by the rediscovery and renewed proclamation of the pure doctrine of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins" (pp. 59, 61). Since the Reformation was the "rediscovery of the Gospel," Lutheranism does not plead guilty to the charges that it was an "apostasy from the Church," that it spiritually dismembered not only Germany but all Europe, and that it disrupted the unity of the Church (pp. 76 ff.). As the rediscovery and reassertion of the pure Gospel, the Reformation stands fully justified. Again, the Lutheran Church does not apologize for its confessionalism. Its basis of confession is not what Luther teaches but what Scripture declares, and its faithful insistence upon God's Word justifies its "obstinacy" even over against Calvinism. "The power which enabled our fathers to resist this temptation [of overhasty and false union] was the power of conscience bound to the Word of God." (P. 109.) The firm stand of Lutheranism upon Holy Scripture explains in particular its doctrinal differences with the Reformed church groups on such important points as the Gospel, faith, the Church, justification, predestination, the Incarnation, and the Real Presence. Adhering loyally to Scripture, Lutheranism must repudiate also the Neo-Calvinism of Karl Barth, today controlling the general confessional groups, whose proposed union it cannot take seriously, just as little as orthodox Calvinism can take it seriously. Lastly, since Lutheranism stands four-square on God's Word,

it rightly interprets also its relation to the *una sancta ecclesia* and also to divergent church groups. Speaking of church unity, Dr. Sasse writes: "Such [true] unity is achieved only when, in the joyful assurance of our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are one in our understanding of what His saving Gospel is and in our understanding of what He gives us in His Sacraments." (P. 179.) "The Evangelical Church," Dr. Sasse concludes, "is a Church which has been sentenced to death by the world. But although it invites new death sentences by doing so, the Lutheran Church remains steadfast in its opposition to this tremendous temptation to abandon the faith of the Reformation." (P. 180.) Such is the joyous confessional ring which we find throughout this fine book. As the *résumé* shows, Dr. Sasse has rightly explained what it means to be Lutheran, and for this reason we hope it will be studied by many. To our American Reformed church groups the confessional Lutheran Church is at best an enigma; commonly the Calvinistic churches regard it as a bigoted, narrow-minded, uncharitable group of better-than-thou Christians, which has no right to exist in an age that is basically tolerant. In consequence of this Lutherans at times are tempted to yield to the syncretistic spirit of the age and to renounce their precious birthright. Dr. Sasse's book will explain to American Calvinists why Lutheranism does not yield, and to timid Lutherans why they dare not yield, unless, of course, they are willing to repudiate the Reformation. *Here We Stand* belongs into every public and school library of our country as a publication whose message ought to be discussed in all religious circles of our land; for it is a clear and sharp bugle-call, which our syncretistic and indifferentistic theological generation sorely needs for new appreciation of the Christian obligation of loyalty to the Word of God.

Of course, all this does not mean that the reader will find himself in agreement with every thought or statement in the book. We regret, for example, that Dr. Sasse does not draw the final conclusion which his premises demand, namely, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Europe (and in the world) should be a sovereign, autonomous Church, altogether free from state control or any substitute of state control. He does not insist upon the *Freikirche*, but rather advocates confessional Lutheran groups in the general *Volkskirche*, without perceiving that such association needs must stifle all effective confession-alism. Again, it seems as if the author hazily identifies the *una sancta* with the existing visible Christian Church (or Christendom) in such a manner as if the two formed a sort of unit. It is true, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution, there the *communio sanctorum* exists, because through the means of grace the Holy Spirit gathers the elect into the *ecclesia invisibilis*. But the Church of Christ, in its real sense, is never to be identified with the visible Church, as if the two were one and the same thing.—Of other statements in the book that invite criticism we name by way of example the following: "The Incarnation represents a change in the eternal Son's being." (P. 145.) We are sure that Dr. Sasse does not wish this to be understood in a pantheistic sense; yet, as it reads, it stands in need of correction.—Furthermore, quoting Eiert's *Morphologie des Luthertums*, the author endeavors to present Luther's

view of the "God of predestination" as he (supposedly) develops this in *De Servo Arbitrio*. In substance, he says that the *Deus absconditus*, the "God of absolute predestination," makes us responsible for demands which we cannot fulfil, asks us questions which we cannot answer, creates us for good and yet leaves us no other choice than to do evil, hardens Pharaoh's heart, hates Esau even before he was born, and thunders in pitiless sovereignty at these unhappy creatures: *Tua culpa!* (P. 138.) To this view, he adds, Luther clung to the end of his days. In reality, however, the view here presented was never Luther's actual teaching of the sovereign God, but it is a Calvinizing view of Luther's doctrine of God. For one thing, Luther's *Deus*, while sovereign, of course, was never a "God of absolute predestination" but one who has chosen the elect in Christ. Luther of course recognized a *Deus absconditus* but saw, and set forth in his entire theology, only the *Deus revelatus in evangelio*. Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* is neither Calvinistic nor Calvinizing and must not be represented so. (Cf. Dr. Bente's excellent discussion of the subject in *Triglotta*, Historical Introduction, pp. 195—228; also Dr. Engelder's timely articles on the matter in the current issues of the *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*.) — Moreover, Luther's dictum regarding the Biblical books which "urge Christ" is falsely applied by Dr. Sasse, and Luther is wrongly accused of a "subjectivity of judgment" in his exegesis. (Cf. p. 117.) We believe that on this point Lutheran theologians ought to defend Luther rather than attack him. Luther's so-called "subjective judgments" (e. g., of the Epistle of St. James) will appear in quite a different light if their background and accompanying circumstances are carefully considered.

We offer these criticisms to show that the reader must not expect to find a book which historically and doctrinally is faultless. As all other books written by men must be studied judiciously and critically, so also Sasse's *Here We Stand*. But these faults do not disturb the merit of the book in its central theme and argument, which show what Lutheranism really is and what *iure divino* it demands. As a vindication and analysis of confessional Lutheranism this new work of Dr. Sasse has no equal among German writings on the subject published in recent years.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Fundamental Christian Beliefs. By W. Arndt, Ph. D., D. D. 95 pages, 5×7½. Price, 25 cts.

Instructors Guide for Fundamental Christian Beliefs. By W. O. Kraeft. Loose leaf, 8½×11. Price, \$1.00. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Test-Sheets for Fundamental Christian Beliefs. Price, 10 cts. per set.

It will not be taken amiss if we make a few general observations before reviewing the three items listed above. In the fall of 1935 the venerable President of Synod appointed a special Teacher-training Committee to prepare materials for the systematic training of Sunday-school teachers. This committee has been at work ever since and plans to issue a series of eight foundation courses for the training of Sunday-school teachers in particular but intended also for all who are doing church-work and feel the need of special training. Each course will have a

text-book for the teacher, a set of *Test-sheets*, and an *Instructors Guide*, the latter for the use, exclusively, of the instructor. A system of credits has been worked out, and all who take the courses will be encouraged to work for credits. To facilitate accreditation, each book is divided into eight chapters, or lessons. The student will be required to attend the eight class sessions and devote an equivalent period of time to the preparation of each lesson. Those working for credit will be obliged to take the tests. Course cards will be issued to all persons for each course successfully completed.—Dr. Arndt's book is the third of the series to appear in print. It is a fine survey of the doctrines of Scripture, a dogmatic *in nuce*, written in popular language and hewing to the line. Appended to each chapter is a series of review questions for all teachers and a special section with problems for more advanced teachers. The *Instructors Guide* furnishes answers to the review questions and additional material for each lesson. It also gives directions for organizing and enrolling a class, administering the tests, presenting the lessons, conditions for getting credit, and many other things. The *Test-sheets* are printed separately and must be ordered as a separate item, one set for each teacher. The cost of the teachers' books has been kept down to a minimum in order that every teacher may obtain a copy. The cost of the *Test-sheets* is negligible considering the important purpose which these tests are to serve and the benefits that instructor and teacher alike will derive from them. Every busy pastor will welcome the *Instructors Guide*; for it will save him an infinite amount of work and will help him to restrict the subject-matter and at the same time diversify the course. All those who are interested should order a copy of the *Instructors Guide*, the text-book, and the *Test-sheets*. A description of the program is given in a *Prospectus*, which will be mailed to individuals free of charge by Concordia Publishing House. We welcome the Concordia Teacher-training Series and hope that it will be used extensively within and without our Church. The success of this very excellent teacher-training program rests primarily with our pastors. If they enter into the spirit of the program whole-heartedly, it will mean that the general standard of teaching in our Sunday-schools will be raised during the next few years—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The Choice Before Us. By E. Stanley Jones. The Abingdon Press. 235 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

We are reviewing this book because of the prominence of the author. The thesis of the book is that neither Naziism, Fascism, Communism (of the Russian brand), nor capitalism can save us; Christianity, the kingdom of God, must do it. But the kingdom of God heralded by Dr. Jones will not do it. His kingdom makes little of the forgiveness of sins. On the 235 pages the forgiveness of sins is not once mentioned. He had occasion to mention it when he expounded Luke 4:18: "Preach the Gospel to the poor." But this is his exegesis: "Jesus put content into the kingdom idea by His manifesto at Nazareth: 'Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor [the economically disinherited]'. . . . What, then, would be good news to the poor? The only good news that would be adequate is that there should be no poor.

Poverty can be banished." (Pp. 36, 56.) Dr. Jones should not feel aggrieved when Professor Zwemer says that "the book is somewhat weak in its theology." We would say that it is not Christian in its theology. It does take over some of the ethics of Christianity. It castigates those who are responsible for the crimes committed in the economic sphere. But what is wrong with Dr. Jones's teaching of Christian ethics is that it places ethics in the center of his theology, having first taken the life out of ethics—the power of the Gospel and the eager expectation of the blessed life in heaven. Moreover, the line of action prescribed to the Church would, if adopted, result in a secularistic perversion of Christianity.—Dr. Jones does not care to have the Christian dwell much on the life to come. "Organized religion has impoverished earth in behalf of heaven. Look at the hymnology and see, though not so much as formerly, how most hymns end up with heaven. It is the place of final longing, and earth is passed by as a vale of tears. This has drained away the finest thinking and aspiration of the race from present life here and now." (P. 136.) The Communism advocated by Dr. Jones had a fine beginning at Jerusalem. But it failed, because "it was indeed a cooperative order in consumption but not in production and was thus only partially applied" (p. 57). And it failed because the apostles deserted it. "They missed their step when they said: 'It is not desirable that we should drop preaching the Word of God and attend to meals.' . . . The apostles withdrew from that stream of the sacredness of all life and of all tasks in the kingdom and started a tendency to try to spiritualize life apart from the material." (P. 147.) One more plank in Dr. Jones's platform: "When there is a sufficient majority, we shall not hesitate to put this Kingdom program through legislative halls into the national life. . . . Prof. R. Muir says: 'It is a bloodless religion, of which politics is not its most practical expression.'" (P. 218.) —What makes Dr. Jones so popular? Not merely this, that he can write most interestingly and popularly. It is mainly that he preaches Pelagianism, Modernism, evolutionism, unionism, and activism. The people like that.

TH. ENGELDER

Pro Ecclesia Lutherana. Vol. VI, No. 1. 63 pages, 6×9.

This number contains a long essay on "The Importance of the Sacrament," by the Rev. A. W. Wismar, Ph. D., and the conclusion of a historical article on "The Rite of Baptism," by the Rev. Walter C. Daib. Both essays are worthy of the most careful study. A few printer's errors should be corrected: p. 23, 8th line from top, should be John 6; p. 39, 11th line from bottom, should be Gal. 2; p. 41, 7th line from top, should read "feebleness."

P. E. KRETZMANN

The Art of Illustrating Sermons. By Dawson C. Bryan. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 272 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$2.00. May be ordered through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

While we are far from agreeing with the author in all his contentions or views, we nevertheless admit that there is much material here which will aid the man who carefully plans his sermons to do better work.

The following headings of the chapters will give our readers a fair picture of its content: 1. Preaching in which People See. 2. The Master Story-teller. 3. Varieties of Illustrations and Their Use. 4. Gathering Materials. 5. More about Gathering Materials. 6. Keeping Materials. 7. Building Illustrations into Sermons. 8. Composing the Illustration. 9. The Story Method of Preaching. 10. The Art of Effective Presentation. 11. The Soul of the Builder. One of the most helpful features of the book is the list of references and notes which tabulate his sources. In the course of his remarks the author speaks of matters also which are not strictly a part of his subject; for instance, he discusses delivery and gives his opinion on the different methods: reading from manuscript, preaching from notes, "without crutches," and extempore preaching. In discussing these methods, he repeats what has been said hundreds of times by others. Considering paper, binding, and size, the book seems somewhat expensive.

M. S. SOMMER

The Use of the Bible with Children. By Ethel L. Smither. The Methodist Book Concern, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, 135 pages, 4¼×6¾. Price, 75 cts.

The one point that can be urged in favor of this book is that the author has some good pedagogical hints, especially in the first chapters, and particularly under the heading "The Teacher's Purpose." But the book is wholly inadequate in its appreciation of the Bible. It contains untenable concessions to a false higher criticism (pp. 19, 28, 44, 46), including the significance of Christ's miracles. And strangest of all, the author does not want the most significant and valuable stories told to little children, e. g.: "The story of the crucifixion and of the resurrection will never be told to them" (little children), p. 82; "The resurrection story was not told," p. 99. Cp. also p. 64: "Song prayers addressed to Jesus will be avoided." According to this strange book the Bible becomes a glorified code of ethics, whereas St. Paul, speaking of Timothy from the time that he was a babe in arms, remarks that the purpose of the Bible is to make men wise unto salvation by faith in Christ Jesus.

P. E. KRETZMANN

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