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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review — Literatur

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Vom Ärgernis des Menschenwortes in der Heiligen Schrift. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift. Von D. Dr. Hans Rüst, Professor in Königsberg. Verlag von C. Bertelsmann. Gütersloh, 1930. 52 Seiten 6x9. Preis, kartoniert: RM. 1.50.

Wir haben es hier mit einem theologischen Kunststück ersten Ranges zu tun. Prof. Rüst verwirft „die Lehre von der wörtlichen Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift“ (S. 30.) „Die Heilige Schrift ist Menschenwort vom ersten bis zum letzten Buchstaben“ (S. 9), enthält „Sagen, Mythen, Märchen, Dichtungen“, „naturkundliche und geschichtskundliche Irrtümer“, ja, „sie enthält Aussagen, welche wider Gottes Wort stehen“ (S. 34), und „verdient als Wort von fehlerhaften Menschen nicht mehr Vertrauen als sonstiges Menschenwort“. Gott hat „seine Kirche davor bewahrt, sich aus der Bibel einen Offenbarungsgabigen zu machen“ (S. 25.) Die Bibel ist in keinem Sinn Gottes Wort. Während die andern Theologen, die die Wortinspiration leugnen, doch dabei behaupten, daß die Schrift Gottes Wort enthält, findet Prof. Rüst darin nichts als fehlerhaftes Menschenwort. Während nun aber diese andern Theologen darauf bestehen, daß das Fehlerhafte in der Bibel beiseitegelegt werde, hält unser Theolog — wie schon vor ihm einige andere — alles in der Heiligen Schrift für wertvoll und fordert uns auf, „das Menschenwort in der Heiligen Schrift gerade in seiner Fehlerhaftigkeit ganz ernst zu nehmen“ (S. 32.) Obwohl „die Heilige Schrift Menschenwort ist vom ersten bis zum letzten Buchstaben“, so ist doch „dies ganze Menschenwort das Zeugnis vom Worte Gottes“ (S. 9.) „Wir müssen das Menschenwort der Heiligen Schrift in seiner ganzen Fehlerhaftigkeit, Armseligkeit, Dürftigkeit und Unsehbarkeit stehenlassen und es Gott zutrauen, daß er auch durch dieses fehlerhafte Menschenwort sein unsehbares Gotteswort bezeugt und immer zu bezeugen imstande sein wird.“ (S. 33.) Wie geht das zu? Ei, „der Heilige Geist kommt mit dem Zeugnis vom Worte Gottes zu ihm [dem Gläubigen] und führt ihn an der Hand des unzulänglichen, widerspruchsvollen Menschenwortes in alle Wahrheit des Gotteswortes“ (S. 28.) Nein, wir haben Prof. Rüst nicht mißverstanden. Er wiederholt es: „Gott behält es sich vor, uns zu seiner Zeit auch durch ein einzelnes, um seiner Fehlerhaftigkeit willen weniger geachtetes Menschenwort der Heiligen Schrift sein Wort in neuer Weise zu sagen und besonders eindringlich zu bezeugen. Das fehlerhafte Menschenwort muß Gott eben allewege zum Zeugnis seines unsehbaren Wortes dienen, wo und wie es ihm gefällt.“ (S. 34.) Das ist das ungeheuerliche Wunder, das Gott täglich tut: er hat die Apostel, die „die uns vom Herrn gesetzten Lehrer der Kirche sind“ (S. 34), durchaus nicht vor Irrtümern und Widersprüchen bewahrt, aber tut uns nun an der Hand dieses irrtumsvollen Buches so unter der Hand — durch besondere Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes — sein unsehbares Wort kund. Wir dürfen diese Märchen und Fehler nicht als unwesentlich streichen, wie die gewöhnlichen Theologen tun, sondern „müssen das Menschenwort in der Heiligen Schrift gerade in seiner Fehlerhaftigkeit ganz ernst nehmen. . . . Denn sonst hören wir das Gotteswort, wovon es doch zeugt, schon gar nicht mehr.“ (S. 32.) Gott wollte nicht das Wunder tun, uns eine infolge der wörtlichen Inspiration irrtumsfreie Heilige Schrift zu geben,

sondern berichtet das viel größere Wunder, uns an der Hand des fehlerhaften Schriftwortes sein unerschließbares Wort zu geben! Man muß natürlich barthianisch geschult sein, um solche Dinge zu schreiben und zu glauben. Hat man einmal den Satz sich eingeprägt, daß in dem Irrtum die Wahrheit sich ausdrückt, dann wird man die Fehler der Bibel nicht als wertlos beiseitelegen. Man wird z. B. finden, daß „ein einzelner biblischer Satz wider Gottes Wort ist“. Aber „auch dann besteht die Möglichkeit, daß ein solcher Satz mit seinem Irrtum doch für Gottes Wahrheit zeugt. Denn auch der menschliche Irrtum lebt nur von Gottes Wahrheit“. (S. 36.) Man wird sich nicht an der Fehlsamkeit der Heiligen Schrift, „an ihrer Knechtsgestalt“, ärgern, wenn man glaubt, daß der Heilige Geist die Kunst versteht, uns durch den Irrtum die Wahrheit nahezubringen.

Th. Engelber

The Bible Comes Alive. By Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. 332 pages, 5½×7½ including index and photographic illustrations. Price, \$2.00.

Sir Charles Marston, who has spent \$200,000 of his own funds to finance Palestinian excavation enterprises, records in this absorbing report on recent archeological discoveries in Bible lands the astounding results of the Wellcome-Marston Expedition, which, among other amazing finds, unearthed the famous Lachish letters, written in the later Phœnician-Hebrew script. In four introductory chapters the author first records earlier discoveries regarding Scriptural data concerning Abraham, Moses, and the fall of Jericho, after which in nine climactically arranged chapters he discusses the remarkable finds at Lachish. Appendices (special valuable contributions by the late Dr. Langdon of Oxford, Alan Rowe of the Beisan Expedition, John Garstang of the Jericho Expedition, Marston and A. H. Gardiner) are added, showing, among other things, that monotheism was the predecessor of polytheism in Sumerian religion and discussing in detail such important topics as the inscription of the Lachish Bowl, the date of Joshua's destruction of Jericho, the date of the Exodus, and the origin of our alphabet, while an extremely important comparative chronology of early Bible history, in agreement with both Scripture and the recent archeological discoveries, forms a fitting conclusion. Thirty-one plates, exhibiting and explaining the finds at Lachish, and six plans and drawings illustrating various historic events in the history of Lachish, are appended. The entire book reads like a romance and while composed with scientific precision, is nevertheless popular enough to hold spellbound intelligent lay readers. We wish that this book could be placed into the hands of every Sunday-school teacher and be put on the shelf of every church and secular library. It is a masterpiece of popular presentation of archeological finds, and it supports in particular the Biblical time of Israel's entry into Canaan and the Biblical claim that Moses and the Israelite followers were able to write down God's laws and words. While Moses was in Midian, there was in existence already the peculiar Sinai-Hebrew script, and later this was modified into the Phœnician-Hebrew script, Israel's gift to the Phœnicians, and not *vice versa*. There is an excellent spirit of genuine piety and holy faith pervading Sir Marston's book, which he wrote to prove that the "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture" has not ceased to be a rock. He writes: "The effect of these discoveries

is to further discredit the whole process of destructive criticism. Archeology, a strictly objective science, is disproving the subjective negations spun from the mentality of the critics. Those who have shaken popular faith in the Bible and undermined its authority, are in turn undermined themselves by the evidence that has been brought to light, and their authority is destroyed. The spade is driving destructive criticism out of the field of questional facts into that of recognized fiction."

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Luthers Evangelienauslegung. Neuausgabe in 5 Teilen. Herausgegeben von Lic. Erwin Mühlaupt. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. 5 Lieferungen oder erster Band, 304 Seiten $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$. Subscriptionspreis der Lieferung je RM. 1.80; Auslandspreis je RM. 1.35. Preis des ersten Bandes RM. 11.80, bei Subscription auf das ganze Werk RM. 8.85; Auslandspreis RM. 10.80, bei Subscription RM. 8.10.

Gar manche der älteren Leser kennen Luthers Evangelien- und Epistelauslegung von C. Eberle, die früher in unsern Kreisen mit Recht viel gebraucht wurde und auch jetzt noch, wenn sie antiquarisch auftaucht, Käufer findet. Weil Luther eben keine vollständige Auslegung der Evangelien und Episteln gegeben hatte, so war dies Werk mit großem Fleiß aus seinen einzelnen Schriften zusammengestellt. Hier erscheint nun aber ein Werk, das noch umfassender ist, nämlich Luthers Auslegung der vollständigen vier heiligen Evangelien. Das Werk ist auf fünf Teile berechnet: Erster Teil: Die Weihnachts- und Vorgeschichte bei Matthäus und Lukas, Matth. 1 und 2; Luk. 1—3. Zweiter Teil: Das Matthäusevangelium, Kap. 3—25. Dritter Teil: Das Markus- und Lukasevangelium (mit Ausnahme von Mark. 16; Luk. 1—3 und 22—24). Vierter Teil: Das Johannesevangelium (mit Ausnahme der Passions- und Ostertage). Fünfter Teil: Die Passions- und Ostertage aus allen vier Evangelien. Dies ist darum ein wertvolles Werk, und welcher lutherische Theolog sollte sich nicht dafür interessieren, was Luther zur Auslegung der vier Evangelien gesagt hat? Hat Luther sich lateinisch ausgesprochen, so sind diese Stellen übersetzt worden und am Anfang mit einem Stern (*) bezeichnet, damit das Werk auch von Laien, die die Bibel lieben und sich gern von Luther etwas über sie sagen lassen, gelesen werden kann. Bei den deutschen Texten wurden hier und da lange Sätze geteilt, und Ausdrücke und Wendungen Luthers, die heutzutage schwerer verständlich sind, wurden vereinfacht, aber nur im Notfall, wenn die Lesbarkeit und Verständlichkeit für den heutigen Leser es zu fordern schien. Immer ist genau angegeben, wo sich die betreffende Ausführung Luthers in der großen Weimarer Lutherausgabe findet. Der Text ist dann mit wertvollen Anmerkungen versehen, um die Auspielungen Luthers recht verständlich zu machen, und das ganze Werk, obwohl populär gehalten, steht doch zugleich auch auf der Höhe der heutigen Lutherforschung. Wie angedeutet, ist der erste Band jetzt abgeschlossen und zum bequemen Gebrauch auch mit einem Sach- und Namenregister versehen. Die einzelnen Bände können auch einzeln bezogen werden; nur erhält man das Werk billiger, wenn man auf alle fünf Teile subscribiert. In etwa drei Jahren soll es vollständig vorliegen. Wenn mehrere Auslegungen Luthers vorhanden waren, ist die wertvollste ausgewählt worden. So ist das Werk eine Fundgrube sowohl für die persönliche Bibelarbeit wie auch für die Vorbereitung des Pfarrers auf Predigt, Bibelstunde und Unterricht, und wir sehen den weiteren Lieferungen mit viel Interesse entgegen.

L. Fürbringer

Peter and the Church. By G. Campbell Morgan, D. D. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 96 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Dr. Morgan, now advanced in years, deservedly occupies a high place in the esteem of Bible Christians because he is a master of popular Biblical exposition. In the volume before us he discusses Matt. 16:17-19 and 1 Pet. 2:5-10, passages which refer to the Church and which were either spoken to or by Peter. One is glad to see that the Church is correctly defined as the body of believers. (P. 26.) In fact, doctrinally the volume is sound and reliable. Now and then one cannot agree with the author's interpretation. Thus the great passage Matt. 16:19, speaking of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, is held by Dr. Morgan to refer to what the Church *teaches* on the basis of the Scriptures. He takes the meaning to be that, when the Church, in obedience to her Master's orders, proclaims something as binding upon us, it is binding, and when she on this basis declares something to be a matter of indifference, this may be omitted or done, as we choose. A Lutheran will at once say that the doctrine is right, but the exegesis is wrong, as the parallel passages, especially John 20:23, show. The volume apart from its edifying contents is of value for the preacher through its demonstrating to him how expository preaching can be effectively done.

W. ARNDT

Doctrine in the Church of England. The report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922. The Macmillan Company, 1938. 242 pages, 5¼×8¼. Price, \$1.75.

In introducing this report, the chairman, Archbishop Temple, states that the commission of some twenty churchmen was appointed to "consider the grounds and nature of Christian doctrine with a view to demonstrating the extent of existing agreement within the Church of England and with a view to investigating how far it is possible to remove or diminish the existing differences." The commission endeavored to treat the divergent theological views synthetically and hoped that by a process of cooperative thought they could fashion a Christian theology more adequate than any that has preceded it. (P. 24.) The report does not contain a comprehensive presentation of all doctrines held in the Anglican Church but emphasizes those doctrines concerning which there is controversy. In this review we shall restrict ourselves to four major points.

1. Authority in religion. The commission seems agreed that the first authoritative source of doctrine is Scripture. But the Bible is not accepted as the absolute norm, for not only is the doctrine of inspiration denied (e. g., the gospels do not contain the *ipsissima verba* of Christ but reflect the experience of the primitive Church (p. 33); some of the Bible's utterances are inspiring and therefore inspired (p. 28); but the Bible is viewed as the record of God's self-disclosure in history and experience, and therefore not individual statements of the Bible but the book "as a whole" is the norm of doctrine. In conformity with Anglican thinking, which overemphasizes the Church, the voice of the Church, the *consensus fidelium*, is viewed as the second authority in religion. But also this is not a binding norm; for this free and continued consensus, especially as

it is expressed in the Anglican formularies, does not imply detailed assent to every doctrinal and liturgical phrase. The report advocates the theory of "doctrinal development." True, it states that the revelation in Christ is final. But it claims with equal emphasis that the content of this revelation is recognized in the religious and moral development of the human race as a whole and is ever more fully apprehended in the life of the mystical body of Christ. (P. 43.)

2. Sin and grace. Sin is "the universal experience that man tends to do what is other than perfectly good" (p. 60). Original guilt is corporate and therefore not individual guilt, or *reatus*. On the doctrine of sin the commission decided that "it is clear that the Church is not committed to any one doctrine" (p. 69) and thus followed the "fathers of Trent," who, failing to settle the divergent views between the Scotists and Thomists, agreed on an ambiguous and meaningless phrase. An Anglican clergyman, Rev. A. G. Hebert, in "Memorandum on the Report" complains that the commission speaks with an uncertain and hesitating voice on the doctrine of man and sin.—In its definition of grace the commission has remained quite close to Eastern Orthodoxy by defining it as *favor Dei* and as *gratia infusa*. (P. 52.)

3. Person and work of Christ. The commission is agreed only in this, that "it is our duty to seek ways to solve the intellectual difficulties" of the *unio personalis*. (P. 83.) It is admitted that the Virgin Birth is both accepted and denied by members of the Church and of the commission. (P. 83.) Christ's death and resurrection is viewed merely as a pledge and symbol of man's ultimate victory through his own suffering and death. (P. 86.) The governmental theory of the atonement seems to meet the approval of the commissioners. (P. 91 ff.)

4. The Church, the ministry, and the Sacraments. Almost one half of the report is devoted to these points. The unity and fellowship of the *una sancta* are predicated of the visible Church. The emphasis is on "the social and corporate character" of the Church, which is defined not as the communion of *believers* but as "the whole company of those who share in the *regenerate* life." (P. 106.) The unity of this social community is not to be sought in doctrinal but rather in sacramental unity. The report lists divergent opinions on the specific manner in which the Sacraments are efficacious, on the Real Presence, *e. g.*, transubstantiation, virtualism, receptionism (168 ff.), on the question whether the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament or a sacrifice; but the commissioners are agreed that the Sacraments are important because "they afford an instance of that corporate action without which the corporate life of the Church must atrophy" (p. 126). The theory of the episcopacy *jure divino* is upheld as the means whereby the unity and continuity of the Church is maintained.

The report is highly significant and deserves careful study for the following reasons: 1. Anglican theologians are playing a prominent part in the World Conference on Faith and Order, in which virtually all denominations excepting the Roman Church are represented. It seems that the theological principles of this report will be largely represented in the unionistic World Conference. 2. Denominations cannot always

be evaluated on the basis of their historical confessions. In a letter the present reviewer was informed that the doctrinal position of the Protestant Episcopal Church is probably most clearly represented in this report. This Church must therefore be viewed on the basis of this report in spite of the opposition which has been voiced against it. 3. Instead of simplifying the proposed union between the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches this report with its emphasis on the Episcopalian form of government seems to widen rather than to close the chasm between the two churches.

F. E. MAYER

Our Protestant Heritage. A series of sermons by Harold John Ockenga, Minister, Park Street Congregational Church, Boston, Mass. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 140 pages. Price, \$1.00.

In these times, when you hear and read so much about unions and unionism, it is somewhat refreshing to find an author who is against union, absolutely, even denominational union; for even "denominations obscure Protestantism's functioning." The ideal he finds in his own church, Park Street Church, which has its own constitution and is answerable to no one but its own congregation. The publishers describe the book as a vigorous defense of democracy; really it is a plea for Congregationalism. Unionism, he says, means enforced uniformity, a new Rome; violated convictions; and, above all, suppression of soul liberty or the right of dissent; and that is the genius of Protestantism; and if Protestantism fails, America is doomed. Even practically this individualism would solve many of our present troubles. Abolish all hierarchies and committees and organizations demanding support with high-pressure salesmanship and campaigns, and let the inspiration come from below through heart interest, and some colleges supported by Christian gifts and teaching anti-Christian theories would immediately end their career of destruction. Kill all secretaries, metaphorically, of course, by removing them from mediating between missionaries and churches, and let the returned missionaries make their appeal directly; if they have the fire of God, the money will come; if not, the work deserves to die. Where there are too many churches in a community, instead of subsidizing them, let them compete for the support needed and let nature take its course — survival of the fittest.

In seven chapters the author tries to show how we came by our Protestant heritage. It is a "dialectic" in seven steps: Luther, the Reformation Truths; Zwingli, the Reformed Doctrine of Communion; Calvin, the Truth of Predestination; William of Orange, Christian Liberty; Knox, the Power of Conscience; Cromwell, the Providence of God; and, finally, Roger Williams, who perfected the work of the Reformation by bringing the genius of Protestantism to America.

His theology is poor. Luther did not completely break with Rome in the doctrine of Communion; "he taught that the words of Jesus in the sixth chapter of John [?] 'This is My body,' were literal." His Calvin, in a frantic effort to explain his predestination, becomes a synergist.

But his history is poorer. There should be a kind of NRA to compel

any man who in this day and age wants to write on Reformation history to read something later than Mosheim. Mistakes and inaccuracies are innumerable in the book. Luther was reared in penury. The Pope first dispatched Eck to refute Luther, then commanded Cajetan to silence him, then sent Miltitz to bribe him. Zwingli was born seven weeks before the birth of Luther. Calvin held to an Episcopal ministry. Henry of Navarre, in 1572, married the daughter of the French king, though Margaret was nineteen years old and the king twenty-two. Catherine of Aragon was the aunt of Philip of Spain, and because of the strength of Philip the Pope did not dare to sanction Henry VIII's divorce, though all this happened in 1527, the very year in which Philip was born. The Church in England "retained the Episcopal form and hence became Anglican!" Here are two sentences in which not one statement is true: "William, Prince of Orange, was born of a noble Roman Catholic family whose ancestry went back to the beginnings of Netherland history. In marriage his father and mother had united the two provinces of Nassau and Orange, which were the wealthiest sections of the most prosperous North countries." William's parents were Lutherans, but he was reared Catholic at the court of Charles V, where he became a page at the age of ten. His father was Count of Nassau and had nothing to do with Orange, but William inherited it from a cousin who died childless. Nor did the Counts of Nassau have anything to do with the Netherlands; first contact between the two came when William was made *Stadtholder*. And if any traveler has found Nassau and Orange in the North countries, his compass must have stuck, like Corrigan's. Nassau is in South Germany and Orange in Southern France, only 60 miles from the Mediterranean! — Why should such books be published? They are no credit to the author nor to the publisher.

THEO. HOYER

Lesson Commentary for Sunday-Schools. 1939. Edited by Charles P. Wiles and D. Burt Smith. United Lutheran Publication House. 319 pages, 6×9. Price, \$1.75.

This lesson commentary does not follow the series which has been adopted by our synodical Board of Education but that of the International Sunday-school Lessons. The first quarter treats of the "Life and Work of Peter"; the second, the "Life and Letters of Paul"; the third, "Lessons from Israel's Leaders (Solomon to Isaiah)"; the fourth, "The Kingdom of Heaven: Studies in Matthew." While most of these lessons can hardly be correlated with the Catechism text, they certainly do convey eternal truths of the Word of God and as such may serve their purpose. The treatment of the lessons follows the same plan: an explanation of the text; geographical and historical material, if any; the lesson interpreted; the lesson applied. A feature of every quarter is a temperance lesson. In the hands of a skilful leader this material may serve to train Sunday-school teachers for their responsible task, at least so far as subject-matter is concerned. It will certainly be necessary for every teacher to make his own lesson plans, especially by way of selecting important points, choosing methods, working out questions, and, above all, in trying to induce thinking on the part of the pupils. Pastors who are anxious to remain out of a rut will do well to make an occasional

examination of books of this type. We may not be able to use them as they are offered, but it will certainly sharpen our judgment and possibly develop initiative if we study the work of others in the field of Christian education.

P. E. KREZMANN

Our Mission among the Blind. By Rev. A. H. Kuntz, 805 Lindaraxa Park, Alhambra, Calif. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 44 pages, 5×7. Price, 25 cts.

We hope that this interesting and timely pamphlet on our Missions among the Blind will reach all communicant members in our Church, so that they may love also this important mission. Pastor Kuntz, who is in charge of the work, vividly describes the history and extent of our missionary efforts among the blind and proves by word and picture that they are not in vain but greatly blessed. May our congregations ardently support this mission, which at this time is only in its beginnings.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Gospel According to Strange Evangelists. By John Schmidt, B. D. 118 pages. Price, \$1.00.

If He Should Fail. By Chester M. Savage. 142 pages. Price, \$1.00.

Sermon Seeds in the Psalms. By A. MacFadyen. 140 pages. Price, \$1.00.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York:

God's Control. By Samuel M. Shoemaker. 155 pages. Price, \$1.50.

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

I Forgot to Say. A Gust of Afterthought. By F. W. Boreham. 284 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.75.

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