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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review — Literatur

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Difficult Bible Questions Answered. Scriptural Knowledge for the Layman. The combined results of the helpful labors of a number of Christian pastors, professors, and other authorities on Scripture interpretation. Edited by George H. Sandison, A. M., Ph. D. Two volumes in one. The World Syndicate Publishing Company, Cleveland, O., New York, N. Y. 726 pages (plus several appendices), 5½×8¼. Price, \$1.00.

This is a new print of a work that has been in existence a considerable time. Generally speaking, it is a good book, which deserves a wide circulation. There are some things in it which demand criticism; for instance, when we are told (Vol. I, Question 56) "that the world is far older by many thousands of years than our forefathers supposed," we demur. When (Vol. II, Question 91) the statement is made concerning John's baptism, "His baptism was not regarded as conferring an immediate consecration, but as being preparatory, and the disciples of Jesus, taking this view, rebaptized the followers of John (see Acts 19:3-5)," we again cannot agree. Usually, however, we find ourselves in accord with the interpretation of difficult passages offered in this volume. To give a sample, we shall quote the answer to the question: At what meal did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper? (Vol. II, Question 232): "There has been much discussion concerning the meal at which the Lord's Supper was instituted, as to whether it was the paschal supper according to the Jewish law. The first three gospels indicate that the use of the guest chamber was secured in the manner customary with those who came from a distance to keep the festival. The three evangelists state that 'they made ready the passover,' and Jesus Himself calls the meal 'this passover' (Luke 22:15, 16). After a thanksgiving He passed around the first cup, and when the supper was ended, there was the usual 'cup of blessing,' and a hymn was sung, presumably the last part of the *Hallel*. John's gospel, however, would seem to imply that the Lord's Supper took place the day preceding the usual Jewish paschal meal (John 13:1, 2). In John 19:14, when our Lord was before Pilate and about to be led out to Calvary, we are told that it was 'the preparation' of the Passover, and again, after the crucifixion (v. 31), the Jews were solicitous because it was still 'the preparation.' Further, the law of Ex. 12:22 was that none should go out of the door of his house until the morning after the paschal supper, although this law may have come into disuse. Lightfoot, a leading authority, claims that the supper was held two days before the Jewish Passover, while Bengel held that it was eaten the evening before the Passover. The question is an open one, and in view of conflicting opinions of commentators it will probably so continue." The work here speaks with becoming reserve. In our own Synod various views have been published on this exegetical question, and

Dr. Stoeckhardt, as we see from his writings, did not always hold the same opinion concerning it. A question of a different nature we find Vol. II, Question 129: "Are Christians expected to wear only the poorest and commonest clothes?" The answer runs thus: "We do not believe that the blessing of God would be withheld from one who wears decent clothes corresponding with the position occupied in society. The sin to be most earnestly avoided is pride in such things. No one has a right to dictate in such trivial matters as the quality of another's clothes. The Christian is a law unto himself. As he consecrates himself unto God, he will be more and more disposed to curtail his expenditures on himself that he may have the money to devote to religious and philanthropic work. But how far he shall carry this self-denial his conscience must decide." These samples will show both the kind of questions touched on in this volume and the manner of treatment. A valuable feature of the interpretations frequently is that a more literal rendering of difficult passages is presented, through which the obstacles are removed. The theology of the work is that of the Reformed churches.

W. ARNDT

The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church. By P. H. Buehring, A. M. D. D., Professor of Historical Theology in the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, O. The Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. 116 pages, 5¼×7. Price, 85 cts.

This is a history and characterization of the Buffalo Synod, the Iowa Synod, the Ohio Synod, and of the American Lutheran Church, which will reach the tenth anniversary of its organization August 11, 1940. Confining himself to essentials, the author has succeeded, in spite of the limited space at his disposal, in drawing a clear picture of his subject. And he possesses the rare gift of the true historian's objectivity. A few excerpts may exemplify this. "The Missourians gave Iowa no rest. They pointed out again and again the insufficiency of Iowa's conception of confessional obligation. . . . This persistent hammering away at the weakness of the synod's position could not remain without effect." (P. 43.) "The period from about 1830 to 1855 is marked in the history of the Ohio Synod by a steady advance in the direction of conservative Lutheranism." (P. 63.) "The Ohio Synod had refused to be beguiled into fellowship with other bodies until it was firmly convinced that such bodies shared whole-heartedly its own confessional position. It had contended earnestly against unionism, even in its most subtle forms. It had gone through a fight against secret societies, with the loss of an entire district at a time when neighboring synods were openly befriending secret orders. On the very eve of the contemplated merger with Iowa it had delayed action until that synod had fully satisfied it concerning its faith in the plenary inspiration of the Word of God. This sound, determined confessional Lutheran orthodoxy is perhaps the most important contribution of the former Joint Synod of Ohio to the American Lutheran Church." (P. 100.)

The treatment of the controversy on Conversion and Election, however is unsatisfactory. We shall transcribe the pertinent statements. "Soon after this crisis the great predestination controversy broke out, in which Iowa at once took a definite stand against Missouri." "Ohio

remained a member of this body [the Synodical Conference] until 1881, when it withdrew as a result of the predestination controversy." "Prior to 1877 Ohio had been in full accord with Missouri and the other synods in the Conference on this doctrine; but when Dr. Walther in this year presented a series of theses on the subject before the Western District of his synod and was taken to task by Prof. F. A. Schmidt of the Norwegian Synod and Rev. H. Allwardt of his own synod for attempting to introduce a 'new doctrine' in the Lutheran Church, Ohio men soon began to take sides. The overwhelming majority sided with Schmidt and Allwardt, but a small minority favored Missouri. . . . The synod resolved to withdraw from the Synodical Conference, (1) because the Missouri Synod had 'set forth, and definitely adopted, a doctrine concerning election which we cannot accept; and (2) has definitely declared that it cannot confer with the majority of the delegates our districts have elected this year, because they have felt it their duty publicly to declare that the above-mentioned doctrine is Calvinizing.'" "Dr. Loy, a warm personal friend of Charles Porterfield Krauth as well as of Dr. C. F. W. Walther, nevertheless kept his synod out of Krauth's General Council and took it out of Walther's Synodical Conference when they failed to meet the ideal of confessional Lutheranism as he conceived it.—F. W. Stellhorn was preeminently the theologian of the synod, its specialist on predestination and conversion." "When Ohio became involved in the great predestination controversy with Missouri, Iowa at once openly and bravely stood shoulder to shoulder with Ohio." (Pp. 45, 68, 74, 79, 80, 83.) And now, on page 106: "Standing commissions have met in conference with similar commissions of the Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church in America. Our negotiations with the former by 1938 had reached the point where the general conventions of both bodies could officially declare that a sufficient doctrinal basis for the future establishment of church-fellowship has been established, and thus a controversy extending over a period of more than sixty years bids fair to come to a close." The author fails to state anywhere the points at issue in this controversy. Any future student of church history will not know, from the perusal of this book, what is what. The author should have demanded five more pages on which to discuss this most important matter.

And then this further statement on the same page: "Our commission negotiating with representatives of the United Lutheran Church has likewise come to an agreement with them, and their joint report will no doubt be submitted to the general conventions of both church-bodies in 1940 for final action."

TH. ENGELDER

The German Church on the American Frontier. A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West. Based on the history of the *Evangelischer Kirchenverein des Westens* (Evangelical Church Society of the West), 1840—1866. By Carl. E. Schneider, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Eden Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1939. 579 pages. Price, \$4.50.

This is a valuable and interesting book, in which the author, professor of Church History at Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves,

Mo., sketches the history of the *Kirchenverein* from its earliest beginnings to the time when the name of the organization was changed to *Deutsche Evangelische Synode des Westens* in 1866. The title of the book must therefore be limited in the light of the subtitle; yet, with certain modifications, the author is right when he says (p. 464): "The story of the religious development among these new European groups . . . might equally have been fitted into the frame of almost any of the German denominations arising in the West during the early part of the nineteenth century. From whatever other perspective this study might have been undertaken, however, the essential picture of German religious and ecclesiastical conditions prevailing in the West at this time remains unchanged." So this book is valuable for the study of the early history of our own Church in this country as well, though the work of the Missouri Synod is rarely mentioned; this is perhaps natural since the confessional stand taken by the founders of our Synod and those of the *Kirchenverein* were so different that they mutually excluded each other and attracted and held religiously different classes of people. Yet our fathers worked under exactly the same conditions that are here described; both organizations had their beginning in Missouri, in the neighborhood of St. Louis. Hence the first hundred pages of this book, in which "the German and American Background and the Religious Origins among the Germans in the West" are described, are illuminating for the early history of our Synod. Moreover, the interest of the author is historical; not that he at all hides his religious convictions and ideals, with which we, of course, do not agree; but the emphasis is historical. The text is well annotated; in fact, half of the book consists of footnotes, with citation of many references in the original text, and an appendix of historical documents filling 39 pages of close print; all of which adds greatly to its value. An index of 47 pages, double column, completes the work. — Both the author and Eden Publishing House are to be complimented on the courage shown in the publication of a historical volume of this size!

THEO. HOYER

Lodges Examined by the Bible. By John R. Rice, D.D. Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, O. 109 pages, 5½×7½. Price, 35 cts.

The contents of this excellent witness against antichristian lodges appeared first in the author's periodical *The Sword of the Lord*; but the nine addresses were so very favorably received that the writer was encouraged to publish them in brochure form. Here indeed is an excellent testimony against lodges, which pastors and laymen would do well to read and distribute among such as either are lodge-members already or are tempted to join a lodge. The author knows of what he is speaking, for he himself (as also his father, formerly a Baptist minister, but later a blinded lodge promoter) was a member of the lodge. Why he left the lodge and why also other Christians should leave the lodge is convincingly and appealingly set forth in the stirring nine chapters of the book, in which the writer shows that Scripture condemns the lodge, that Christians must not take the blasphemous oaths of lodges, that the lodge religion is pagan, that it rejects salvation by faith in the blood of Christ, that lodges are a swindle, that lodge oaths are not binding, and

that Christians must "come out from among them and be separate." Dr. Rice's testimony against the lodge is a new valuable contribution toward the antilodge literature which earnest Christians in many denominations have published in our country in various forms for many years. The reviewer is convinced that great blessings will come from its perusal.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Ancient Stones Cry Out. By Peyton Enniss. Biblical Treasures, 74 Trinity Place, New York. 124 pages, 5×7¾.

This is an excellent summary of the latest archeological finds, showing their apologetic value for the Christian student of the Bible. The writer describes himself as a lecturer, traveler, columnist, archeologist, and Biblical authority, and certainly he has succeeded very well in presenting the high spots of the latest archeological discoveries to prove that "Thy Word is truth," a statement with which the book closes. At times he seems to exaggerate the strictly scientific value of the archeological finds and to attempt to prove too much. But in general his statements are true, and the pages are so very heavily packed with archeological facts that we cordially recommend this interesting and instructive archeological apologetic to our pastors, parochial-school teachers, Sunday-school teachers, and all who may wish to teach others how the stones are crying out on behalf of the truth and dependability of the Holy Bible.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Harmony of Science and Scripture. By Harry Rimmer, D.D., Sc.D. John Laurence Frost Memorial Fund. 296 pages, 5½×7¾.

Modern Science and the Genesis Record. By Harry Rimmer, D.D., Sc.D. John Laurence Frost Memorial Fund. 376 pages, 5½×7¾.

Internal Evidence of Inspiration. By Harry Rimmer, D.D., Sc.D. John Laurence Frost Memorial Fund. 244 pages, 5½×7¾.

Dead Men Tell Tales. By Harry Rimmer, D.D., Sc.D. John Laurence Frost Memorial Fund. 352 pages, 5½×7¾.

The four books listed above are from the pen of the well-known fundamentalist and apologist, whose work in defense of the Bible has given him national prominence. The Lutheran pastor may derive much benefit from the reading of these books, even though they do not quite reach the depth which we would desire for advanced theological work. It is unfortunate that in one instance Dr. Rimmer has fallen into a serious error, namely, by adopting a theory of an original creation differing from the six-day creation spoken of in Gen. 1 and 2. It is clear from Ex. 20:11 that the theory as held by fundamentalists of this group is untenable. Bible theologians cannot afford to make any concessions to unbelief in any form.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Christian Religious Education, Principles and Practice. By Prof. Austen K. de Blois, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., and Donald R. Gorham, Ph.D., D.R.E. 385 pages, 5½×8½. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. Price, \$3.00.

This book is the outcome of the combined efforts of Dr. Austen K. de Blois, former president of the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary,

and Dr. Donald R. Gorham, instructor at the same institution. It aims to satisfy "the need for a comprehensive treatment of the whole program of Christian religious education." Since it is based on actual experience in the classroom, the authors "are assured that the subject-matter of the book exactly corresponds to the needs of the present-day student group." The book offers chapters on the history, the psychology, the aims, the methods, the curriculum, and the agencies of Christian religious education. Some forty-five pages are devoted to the history of education in ancient and modern times. One cannot expect detailed reference to all the educational agencies in the various churches and denominations. Yet it seems strange that educational agencies of real value are not even mentioned. Luther's efforts are mentioned on pages 36 and 37, and two quotations cited from his classic *Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen in Behalf of Christian Schools*. Yet the only references to Christian education within the Lutheran Church are the statements that a Lutheran Sunday-school Board was organized in 1930 (p. 286), a brief reference to a week-day church-school in operation in Christ Lutheran Church in New York City since 1906 (to 1907), and to the reading of a paper by Dr. Wenner in 1905 proposing a plan of week-day religious education (pp. 301, 302). Twice the Luther League is listed among other young people's societies. Not a word about the Walther League with its 80,000 members and its educational program for adolescents second to none. Not a syllable about the splendid parochial-school system of the Lutheran Church, though this Church has from the early settlements of Swedish colonies to the present day made the Christian training of its children and young people one of its chief objects. Not a reference to the various normal schools supported to the present day within the Lutheran Church. We hope that Dr. Beck's treatise on *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States* will help to dissipate the widespread ignorance concerning this important educational agency.

While the book offers many valuable suggestions on methods, curriculum, agencies, etc., it can hardly be called a text-book on *Christian religious education*. One rejoices to read the authors' noble confession: "In all avenues of human life and action Jesus Christ is the incomparable Leader and the infallible Guide. Not for one moment do we yield our faith in Him as 'the only-begotten Son of God, as our divine Redeemer, as our incarnate, atoning, and risen Lord and Savior,' when we speak of Him here as also the Supreme Educator. In all realms of thought and feeling and practical activity He is 'the chiefest among ten thousand,' and 'He is altogether lovely.' Nevertheless, it is now our specific enterprise to consider His place as Teacher and Educator." Yet what is one to think of the following record of "the principles which bear the seal and superscription over Christ's teaching" on Christian education? Here is the record:

"There is one God, and only one.

"God is personal.

"The one personal God is Creator, Preserver, Father, Redeemer, and Friend.

"God loves every child of His creation and His care.

"Man may discover God and hold fellowship with Him.

"Fellowship with God means the attainment of righteous character, the ultimate aim of human striving.

"Sin destroys the possibility of fellowship with God.

"God overcomes the power of sin through the giving of Himself, in the person of His Son, as an atoning sacrifice.

"Thus God reconciles man to Himself, reestablishes man's fellowship with Him, and makes possible the attainment of righteous character.

"The means to these ends are repentance, faith, and an obedience born of repentance and faith.

"The soul of man is immortal, and its destiny is determined by its fellowship with God or by its alienation from Him.

"The righteous character of the redeemed man expresses itself in a growing fellowship with God, in loving and understanding sympathy for others, and in sacrificial service in their behalf.

"The Holy Spirit moves in the soul of the redeemed man, comforting him, strengthening him, enlightening him, and guiding him into all the truth."

We fail to find in this record a clear reference to the Trinity in spite of Christ's utterance Matt. 28:19. There is not a word about original sin, total depravity, though Christ said: Matt. 15:18, 19. There is not a syllable on the vicarious atonement rendered in the place of the guilty sinner by Christ, his Substitute, though Christ said: Matt. 20:28. Again, is the attainment of righteous character actually the ultimate aim of human striving? Christ thinks otherwise, Mark 7:21. Christ uses the word redeemed in a sense altogether different from that of the author. Christ's redemption is universal, John 12:47. The author restricts it, in the manner of Calvinism, to men having a righteous character and possessing the Holy Spirit. And while the author tells us that the Holy Spirit moves in the soul of the redeemed man, Christ restricts the gift of the Holy Spirit to men regenerated by water and the spirit, John 3:1-16.

In our day the Christian religion is a stumbling-block and foolishness not only to Jews and Greeks, heathen, but, sad to say, also to many who lay claim to the Christian name. And the warning of Paul to Timothy is timely, particularly in our day: "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith," 1 Tim. 6:20, 21.

TH. LAETSCH

The Lutheran Elementary School: An Interpretation. By Paul Bretscher.

Board of Christian Education of the Northern Illinois District.

Price, 10 cts., postpaid.

This pamphlet is one of the finest and most comprehensive expositions of the philosophy of education as held by our Church. The arguments are so ably and comprehensively presented that every Lutheran pastor will want to have them at hand always in order to promote the cause of true Christian training.

P. E. KRETZMANN