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## Book Review. - Literatur

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## Book Review — Literatur

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

**Harper's Topical Concordance.** Compiled by Charles R. Joy. Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York. 478 pages. 9½×6. Price, \$3.95.

While this stout volume is hardly a "wholly new work" in the sense of providing an index to Scriptural ideas for the first time,—we think of Nave's *Topical Bible*, the various subject-indices, Torrey's *Bible Text-book*, and the Thompson chain-reference system,—still it is doubtless a thorough effort at compiling Biblical ideas and one based on a modern and refreshing list of categories.

If our use of the book were conditioned only by the Preface, we should find ourselves out of harmony with it. For the compiler outlines its sphere of usefulness as follows: "In the old days most preaching was expository. The clergyman selected a Biblical passage and then prepared a sermon to expound the meaning and implications of it. Preaching in modern times has become increasingly topical. The clergyman selects a subject, suggested by the spiritual needs of his people or by the contemporaneous scene, and he then searches for some text appropriate to that theme. How much time can be consumed in such a search every Biblical student, every preacher, knows. . . . The book should fill a gap in the library of all Bible students as an important work of reference."

If this book will strengthen a tendency toward pretextual preaching in our circles, then we can hardly be enthusiastic about it. It is a curious anomaly that modernistic theology, which inveighs so heatedly against the "proof-text method" of preaching based on Biblical authority, should countenance this motto method of utilizing Scripture. For it is this use of pretexts which has made of the modernistic pulpit the demonstration of skill and literary ability but nothing more, nothing of the voice of God to man, seldom a reflection of the depths of the knowledge of God, and usually pleasant but shallow maundering. It is this, more than any single factor, which has made of preaching a non-essential industry, a leisure culture-activity.

But this does not imply that this handsome book has no value for the Scriptural preacher: The Bible is not a collection of catch-phrases but is composed for the most part of carefully outlined and developed essays, sermons, histories. If accordingly Mr. Joy's *Concordance* presents a phrase or sentence under a certain category, there is almost certain to be a considerable reinforcement of the thought of the text in its own context. There are 2,150 topics in this *Concordance*. Many of them are in the King James language, made familiar by the topical indices of the Bible editions; but many are in a more modern mold; we cite at random: *candor, citizenship, employee, expert, gentleman, social injustice, leisure, foreign missions, partiality, success*. It is in the recapturing of



the elusive phrase, the speeding up of the processes of association, that this volume will be of great assistance to the pastor as he prepares to preach and teach. After all, there must be a thorough familiarity with Scripture before its materials fit smoothly and positively into the teaching process. This book will not uncover the Bible; but it will help to recover what is known and enjoyed and therefore to enrich the preacher's speech and rescue it from the dreariness and sameness proverbial of much preaching.

While doctrinal bias might be expected in the intensive classifications required in such a work, the volume is remarkably acceptable also for the conservative preacher. On the subject of *Christ* there is a rich variety of categories. An ample system of cross-reference improves the system of selection.

Thus it is that a work planned for an area of preaching outside of the Lutheran emphasis is of genuine worth to every expository preacher. It deserves to stand next to the textual concordances on our bookshelves.

R. R. CAEMMERER

**The Messages of the Prophets to Their Day and Ours.** By Dallas C. Baer. Pulpit Digest Publishing Co., Great Neck, N. Y. 152 pages, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ ×7 $\frac{1}{8}$ . Price, \$1.50.

**The Messianic Hope of Israel.** Studies in Messianic Prophecy. By Max I. Reich. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 133 pages, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ ×7 $\frac{1}{8}$ . Price, \$1.00.

The author of *Messages of the Prophets* is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church at Selinsgrove, Pa., a member of the United Lutheran Church. He discusses the major prophets, some of the minor prophets, also Elijah, Jonah, and Job. His interpretation not only fails to disclose the essential characteristics of the messages of these Old Testament writers, but in a manner characteristic of the "modern" view of the Bible ignores the Messianic content of prophecy and emphasizes the social implications, bearing down heavily on the darker side of American industry. The Rev. Mr. Baer is actually able to make of Isaiah chiefly a social reformer and does not in one paragraph or sentence bring out the Messianic message of the "Old Testament evangelist." He quotes Habakkuk's "The righteous shall live by his faith" and has not a word to say about justification. A thoroughly unsatisfactory discussion of the messages of the prophets.

The author of the second title is a Hebrew Christian, member of the faculty of the Moody Bible Institute. In a most reverent, thorough, and practical manner he discusses in *The Messianic Hope of Israel* the Messianic prophecies. Many side-lights on prophecy are disclosed by the author's intimate acquaintance with the Masoretic text and Jewish tradition. Where he strays into millennialist interpretation, we do not follow him, but the final conversion of Israel and related notions do not dominate the book, which supplies much good material for sermonic work during the season of Advent and for more than one Lenten series on prophetic texts.

THEODORE GRAEBNER



**The Assurance of Faith.** By Prof. L. Berkhof. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 86 pages, 5½×8. Price, 75 cts.

The author of this timely monograph is professor of dogmatics in the Reformed Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., and author of a four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, a *Manual of Reformed Doctrine*, and other widely read works on doctrinal theology. In his writings he consistently represents the orthodox Calvinistic view, especially in opposition to Pelagianism and Arminianism. The fact that his treatise on the "assurance of faith" appears in its second edition proves that the subject is one of considerable interest and that his study has met with favor in large circles of believing Christendom. And well it may; for what the author here offers is a thorough, scholarly, stimulating exposition of Christian assurance, which no reader can peruse without profit, even though he does not agree with the writer on all points. In six chapters he discusses the following topics: the question of assurance in the present day; the doctrine in history; the connection between faith and assurance; the glory of assurance. The most important chapter in the book is that concerning the *foundation* of the assurance of faith, namely, the promises of God, the witness of the Holy Ghost, and the testimony of the Christian graces. What he writes on this matter is to be understood in the sense of the Canons of Dort, which say on this point: "This assurance, however, is not produced by any peculiar revelation contrary to, or independent of, the Word of God, but springs from faith in God's promises, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort; from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children and heirs of God, Rom. 8:16; and, lastly, from a serious and holy desire to preserve a good conscience and to perform good works." (P. 56.) With regard to the Christian graces Professor Berkhof urges the warning: "Believers are not taught to regard their good works as the meritorious cause of their salvation but only as the divinely wrought evidence of a faith that is itself a gift of God. Their conclusion is based exactly on the assumption that the qualities and works which they discover in their life could never have been wrought by themselves but can only be regarded as the products of sovereign grace." (P. 68.) In the same sense the Formula of Concord declares that "our good works are evidences of the presence and indwelling of the Spirit of God." (*Triglot*, p. 799.) While this is true, the "Christian graces" are only *external proofs* (*testimonia externa*) of our state of grace and hence do not form a foundation of Christian certitude, which, in its proper sense, is always and only "of the essence of faith"; that is, true faith assurance is wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel, coincides with faith, and must never be separated from faith. In other words, true assurance of faith is that divine personal trust in the Gospel promises (*fides divina*) which God Himself engenders in the heart through the means of grace. To distinguish, as the author does, between assurance "that is essential to faith" and assurance "that is not involved in faith" (p. 33 ff.) is both confusing and misleading; for there can be no Christian assurance unless there first be true faith. Assurance begins not earlier or later than faith, but always with faith,



and it is always coexistent with faith, no matter whether the believer has the *sensus gratiae* (which in severe trials may temporarily disappear) or not. As the only object of faith is the Gospel, so also the only object of assurance is the Gospel. Similarly, as the only means of faith is the Gospel, so also the only means of true Christian assurance is the Gospel, to which, of course, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit is indissolubly and efficaciously joined. We cannot follow the author when he writes: "The promises of God are not in and by themselves sufficient to awaken faith in the heart of the sinner. They are not seen in their beauty and strength until the eye of faith is opened by the operation of the Holy Ghost." (P. 56.) As a matter of fact, the Gospel-promises are never "in and by themselves," but they are always efficacious means of grace by which the Holy Ghost works. We must never think of any *separatio Spiritus Sancti a Verbo divino*, since Christ's words are always "spirit and life," John 6:63. Hence Christian assurance has but one object, namely, the Gospel, through which the Holy Spirit works and preserves faith. By its very nature faith suffers no other object than the divine Word; not even faith itself can be the object of faith or Christian assurance. The recognition of this basic truth is necessary in order that believers may be kept from an illusory certitude based upon a specious inward illumination or good works. The author quotes Boston as correctly remarking: "One may go to heaven in a mist, not knowing whither he is going," and then adds: "Our salvation depends on our state and not on our knowledge of it." (P. 82.) Not so did St. Paul speak in 2 Tim. 1:12 and 4:7, 8. While thus this book must be studied with care, its readers nevertheless should be grateful to the author for having presented this important subject to them in so thorough a way. What he writes on the objections of Romanism and Arminianism to assurance of faith, on Methodism's fictitious assurance, on the development of the doctrine from the time of the Reformation until Rationalism threw the doctrine overboard, on the cultivation of assurance and, in his final chapter, on the glory of assurance will make profitable reading for our pastors. To us it seems remarkable that, while there seems to be a weariness of doctrinal discussion in our own circles and with that a "*Tendenz zur Peripherie*," orthodox Calvinism delights in a revival of doctrinal study and succeeds in making this study popular even among its laymen. And private publishing houses, taking a tremendous risk, produce such books on doctrine and make money by doing so.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**These Three Alone.** By Fred Taylor Wilson. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 270 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

We recommend this book to our pastors. It is filled with refreshing and stimulating thought, well written. The author treats his subjects under these three heads: "Know Thyself," "Control Thyself," "Give Thyself." We quote a few statements to arouse an appetite for more: "It is abuse and not use which most rapidly wears out the human frame." (38.) "The true secret of physical attractiveness is beauty of spirit." (39.) "One of the evidences of a trained mind is its capacity for sustained and concentrated thinking." (45.) "The mind will grow



in a limited way when exposed to nature, but good books are its meat and drink." (82.) "We often confuse the terms 'religious' and 'Christian.' Many people are deeply religious who make no claim to a Christian belief. The holy men of India, who sit daily on beds of spikes and otherwise torture their bodies, are very religious, but they are not Christians." (89.) "It has been suggested that our present-day world would profit by declaring a moratorium on all further scientific discoveries until man had accumulated enough spiritual resources to be entrusted with the present fruits of his own scientific brain." (100.) "But some of the unhappiest homes in the world are those where misery walks on velvet and sorrow dines and wines in luxury." (204.) "Christ alone brought a ray of hope to those who look beyond this mortal life. While we see about us in nature lessons which strengthen our faith in an immortal existence, Christ alone offered us a reasonable hope. He did not leave us in the dust. As water quenches our thirst and food satisfies our hunger, so is He the answer to the anxious cry, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' No other traveler has yet returned from that undiscovered country to report to us his journey. He alone bore personal witness to the immortal life. 'Because I live, ye shall live also,' was His comforting counsel." (262.) — Of course, we cannot approve such statements as "There is a unity of belief among many religious groups. The 'Jesus, hold my hand' of the 'Holy Rollers' is at heart the same simple belief as 'The Everlasting Arms' of the Ethical Culture Society. The difference is largely in the manner of expression." (164.) Nor should the "scientists" who date the world back three billion years be given favorable recognition. The Christian motivation for the abundant life ought to be given greater emphasis.

The publisher's jacket gives the following information on the author: "Fred Taylor Wilson has won a threefold distinction as lawyer, author, and lecturer. He is a native Tennessean and an honor graduate of Vanderbilt University. He also holds a law degree from a Texas school, in which State he resided for many years. Mr. Wilson has also served as a Government attorney in both Washington and Chicago. His lecture engagements in recent years have extended from Houston to St. Paul and from New York to Denver. In recent years he has lived in Washington, where he has done much research work at the Library of Congress. He is the friend and companion of many of our leading scholars, statesmen, and Christian leaders." JOHN H. C. FRITZ

**The Philosophy of Courage, or The Oxford Group Way.** By Philip Leon, Oxford University Press, 1939. 222 pages, 4½×7. Price, \$2.00.

The Oxford Group Movement, or Moral Rearmament (MRA), commonly known as Buchmanism, has gained a foothold, at least temporarily, in widely scattered parts of the world. It numbers among its adherents leaders in the fields of science, finance, politics, philosophy, and theology. The movement has been praised as a world-revolution ushering in a new social order, has been denounced as an ethical-culture system on a par with Unity and other metaphysical cults, or it has been ridiculed as a bore. (According to *Time* the picture "Susan and God" satirizes a religion which closely resembles Buchmanism.) The fact is that Buch-



manism is still moving from place to place and conquering new fields. The world circulation of *The Rising Tide* as a one-issue publication and published at 61 Gramercy Park, New York, was over a million. What is the appeal and strength of this movement? Judging purely from the psychological viewpoint, one would have to say that Buchmanism has been successful in gaining converts through its work with individuals. The social gospel of Modernism ignored individual sin and guilt and promised salvation by correcting society *en masse*. As a result the social gospellers had no interest in the spiritual problems of the individual. Buchmanism, however, is interested primarily in the individual, whose soul must be "changed, cured, remade." Only when individuals have been changed, can we hope for an improved society. This philosophy is correct. But the technique of Buchmanism is basically wrong and fundamentally anti-Scriptural. Not only is the true character of sin simply ignored, but the plan of salvation is not even mentioned. This fatal weakness of Buchmanism vitiates whatever redeeming features it may have. In developing their scheme of "changing lives," Buchmanites do not ask, "What is God's plan?" but only, "Does our plan work?" With this pragmatic attitude in mind, they vehemently decry any and every "theological controversy," deliberately avoid reference to any specifically Christian doctrine, and grant to every convert the right to retain his former creed, philosophy, psychology, or ism. The "changed life," no matter how or why the change was effected, is the only condition of Buchmanism. It is a system of applied psychology but not God's plan of salvation. Its Moral Rearmament is autosoterism pure and simple, and its peculiar and unnatural emphasis on sin "raises the ego," makes a hero of the individual in his own eyes. Both of these features appeal to the natural man.

That this brief evaluation of Buchmanism is correct becomes very evident in Leon's work. Leon, an English philosopher and himself a convert to Buchmanism since 1935, presents this movement "in the language of philosophy, psychology, and the imagination." (P. 12.) He summarizes the tenets of Buchmanism as follows: "Let God change you, guide you, in everything along the lines of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love and use you to bring others to Him. When man listens, God speaks. When men obey Him, God acts. When men change, nations change." (P. 14.)

Leon's language is not always as simple as this. But after one has plowed through the first chapter of abstract philosophizing concerning God and man, he will see all the basic elements of Buchmanism in bold relief. Fear is at the bottom of all our troubles. Our various manias (dipsomania, greed, ambition, under conditions even conjugal love, etc.) are a disease, *i. e.*, sin. Man's soul is "cured" when the instinct of self-preservation is replaced by the "passion of the Cross," an unselfish and absolute love. (P. 65.) In the "quiet time" God (according to Leon the personification of honesty, love, courage, p. 207) becomes "my psychoanalyst" (p. 82), and under this "guidance" the life is changed; in other words, courage replaces fear and unselfish love the former manias. The changed life exclaims: "I feel like a young Titan, who could blow off the



roof of the world. I am power and passion. I am the meeting-point of power streaming down and power surging up. I feel I could create worlds. I am the mystery of creation itself. I am birth and rebirth. I am part of the Resurrection and the Life." (P.119.) This pantheistic, mystical experience is followed by "sharing," i. e., the changed man exposes his former self as thoroughly diseased because of fear, in order that another may be led to see his "sin," his lack of courage, his fear. (P.151 ff.) Thus the cured soul will create new personalities, personalities of courage. And all the changed lives will constitute "the army of Revolution, which will be the World Church, the Army of the Resurrection sounding the last trump, the *reveillé* of the Apocalypse." (P.159.) Society will become courageous and arm itself morally through the change of individuals and the surrender of all forms of fanaticisms. (P.171.)

The headquarters of the Oxford Group heartily endorse this volume "as a philosopher's interpretation of the basis of Moral Rearmament." Any one desiring to acquaint himself with this movement will find Leon's book extremely helpful.

F. E. MAYER

**Hymns from the Harps of God. Great Hymns of the Church, Their Authors, and Their Message.** By W. G. Polack. Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., New York and Chicago. 125 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

One of the greatest treasures of the Church is its heritage of hymns. Yet many of the finest hymns of the greatest masters of Christian hymnody are little known and therefore little appreciated. Professor Polack has, even years ago, endeavored to supply interesting and stimulating information concerning some of the most beautiful hymns of the Church in a number of booklets intended for the ordinary reader and lover of Christian hymnody, under the general title of "Favorite Christian Hymns." The present book is another contribution in the field. Although intended also for the average reader, this book shows a wide scholarly background and is bound to give even the indifferent reader some insight into the beauties of Christian hymnody. The author has consulted the best sources, yet he has avoided ponderosity of language, so that one spends delightful hours in perusing page after page bringing interesting information on seventeen of our finest hymns. The division of the book into four parts: Glory Be to God on High; Christ the Lord to Us is Born; Wonder, Love, Worship, and Praise; and Songs in the Night, does much to alleviate the tendency toward tediousness that is sometimes found in books of this type. The book should prove a valuable holiday or birthday present, while yet its authentic and scholarly information will make it an asset to the pastor as well.

P. E. KRETZMANN

**The Use of Candles in Christian Fellowship.** By William H. Leach. Published by Goodenough and Woglom Co., New York. 46 pages. Price, \$1.00.

The author of this little volume is the editor of *Church Management*. He discusses the use of candles in the home, in the church societies, and in the services of public worship. He writes first of candles in the



Roman, Jewish, and Christian tradition. Then he shows how candles may be used in the dedication of a home, at marriages, and for table and festival occasions. We have no fault to find with his suggestions for home and society celebrations, but we cannot agree with his directions on the use of candles in the services of the church. His suggestions may be suitable and fitting for the non-liturgical churches of our land, but surely not for the liturgical Lutheran Church. We have a fine liturgical heritage. Let us learn to appreciate and use this heritage more and more. Then we shall not be tempted to follow the customs or suggestions coming from those quarters of the Church which have held our liturgical traditions in contempt.

W. G. POLACK

**Proceedings of the Sixty-Fifth Convention of the Michigan District.**  
 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 136 pages, 6×9.  
 Price, 18 cts.

This report offers a paper (to be concluded at the next session) read by Pastor O. H. Pfothenhauer, "Brief Sketch of the Seven Churches in Asia Minor, with a Few Practical Applications." Pastor A. P. Marutz spoke on "The Office of the Keys." The Rev. C. J. Engelder exhibited "The Difference between Christian Fellowship and Unionism." In a paper on "Christian Stewardship" the Rev. A. Zeile pictured in a gripping manner the life of "John Christian, a Christian steward," from the cradle to the grave as an example for all children of God. We note that the Secretary reported that in 1937, 10,878 copies of the *Proceedings* were sold; in 1939, 10,143 copies. The price per copy was 11 cents, which may or may not have been the chief reason for such large sales.

TH. LAETSCH

**Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Convention of the Eastern District.**  
 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 84 pages, 6×9. Price,  
 23 cts.

"Facing the World of the Second Century" in the history of our Synod is the theme carried out in the papers read before this District. After the Rev. Chas. Behnke had presented the social, political, and religious setting of our day in general, the Rev. H. Bielenberg pointed out the problems and opportunities and obligations facing the congregations of our day, while the Rev. Th. Martens exhorted Synod to perform its work under the changed conditions with the same loyalty to the Lord and His unfailing Word that prompted the fathers of our Synod in all their activities.

TH. LAETSCH

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*From the Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:*

**Roman Catholicism Slays.** By Lester F. Sumrall. 61 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, 25 cts.

**More Power to the Church.** By David M. Dawson. 76 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, 35 cts.

*From Fleming H. Revell Company, London and Edinburgh:*

**God on the Bowery.** By Charles J. St. John. 155 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

**Road to Revival.** By Vance Havner. 114 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.