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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.

The Science of Biblical Hermeneutics. By R. T. Chafer. Bibliotheca Sacra, Dallas, Tex. 92 pages, 6¼×9¼. Price, \$1.00.

For many years Dr. R. T. Chafer was professor of Apologetics and Hermeneutics at the Dallas Theological Seminary. His manual of *Biblical Hermeneutics*, a formal theological science, sorely neglected in many American theological circles, bears ample testimony to his simple, childlike faith in Christ. He treats the hermeneutical material under such heads as "A Historical Sketch," "Axioms of General Hermeneutics," "Four Prerequisites," "Relation of Logic to Scripture Interpretation," "General Rules of Interpretation," "Treatment of Figurative Language," "Accommodation, Rightly and Wrongly Understood," "Interpretation of Prophecy." For his work he claims no originality, since he follows in a general way Prof. M. Cellerier's *Manual of Biblical Hermeneutics* (translated by Elliott and Harsha); nevertheless it is worthy of careful study also by such as cannot agree to his ardently defended millennialistic views. Sound Biblical interpretation, he declares, must lead the Bible student to a belief in the millennium, and he endeavors to prove this by appealing to basic hermeneutic principles. But with the same conviction the amillennialist is bound to repudiate such interpretation as contradictory to sound hermeneutics. The writer thus argues that, whereas prophecy is a "harmonious whole" (?), and whereas such prophecy as has been fulfilled has been fulfilled literally (?), therefore all prophecy as yet unfulfilled must be fulfilled literally, too; wherefore a millennium must be expected since prophecy predicts an era of consummate peace and good will on earth. Such reasoning, however, is basically incorrect. The author's chapter on the "Relation of Logic to Scripture," especially the part devoted to the inductive method and its application to unfulfilled prophecy, appears as a misguided endeavor to prove the millennium from certain Biblical "particulars," which actually exclude the idea of a millennium. Other chapters, however, are more acceptable than those which champion millennialism. The one on "Accommodation," in which the author points out the "tricks of trade" which Modernists employ to do away with the doctrines of the Christian faith, is very fine. Another serious mistake, however, occurs when Dr. Chafer distinguishes between three degrees of authority in the inspired Biblical record (pp. 35, 36). He fails to see that this distinction annuls the very concept of Biblical inspiration and authority. Of primary authority, he believes, are those passages which God Himself approves as true; of secondary authority are such as must be proved true by "the general standards of Scripture teaching"; and of tertiary authority are such as declare the very things which God disapproves, as examples of the last may be cited the "comfort" of Job's friends, whom God censured, or the fool's declaration that there is no God (Ps. 14:1).

The distinction, of course, is based on a misunderstanding of the real issue; for the author admits that all Scripture is given by divine inspiration. The simple solution of the supposed problem is that God, for our learning (Rom. 15:4), has inspired the sacred penmen to write things both true and untrue, the untrue, however, not as His own sentiments but as those of the wicked. These untrue declarations God Himself condemns as materially or actually untrue, though formally they are true; that is to say, atheists actually declare that there is no God, and scoffers actually declare that this world will last forever (2 Pet. 3:3-14). Such substantially untrue statements of wicked men occurring in the Bible neither disprove the divine inspiration nor the divine authority of Scripture; on the contrary, they prove the Bible to be the divine truth, given by Him who knows and judges the hearts and thoughts of men (Luke 16:15). The author at times speaks of one skilled in hermeneutics as a hermeneut. Properly speaking, a hermeneut is an interpreter, while one skilled in hermeneutics is a hermeneutist. (Cf. *Standard Dictionary sub voce.*)

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Supernaturalness of Christ. Can We Still Believe in It? By Wilbur M. Smith, Department of English Bible, Moody Bible Institute; Editor of Peloubet's Select Notes on the International Sunday-school Lesson. W. A. Wilde Company, Boston, Mass. 1940. 235 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.50.

In the preface of this valuable work the author says correctly (p. VII): "The greatest battle of our age is the one now being fought by two invisible armies, as they struggle to dominate the minds of men. The one army we may rightly call supernaturalism; the other, with equal accuracy, we shall designate naturalism." We might add that the controversy between Fundamentalists and Modernists, which in the press reached its height about fifteen years ago, but which relentlessly continues, is merely one phase of this tremendous battle. The author of this book has made a helpful contribution to the branch of theology which we call apologetics. One can heartily endorse the work done by Christian apologetics without overestimating its importance. Wherever it removes difficulties which keep one or the other from listening to the Gospel-message, it deserves our commendation and support.

To give the reader a conception of the contents of the book, the captions of the six chapters are set down here: 1. The Denial of the Supernatural in Contemporary Thought. 2. The Historical Trustworthiness of the Gospel Records. 3. The Supernatural Elements in the Birth of Our Lord. 4. The Miraculous Works of Christ. 5. The Unique Transfiguration of Christ. 6. The Historical Reality of Christ's Resurrection. An epilog and an index conclude the volume. As appears from this brief survey, the subjects discussed are vital and must engage the interest of every conservative theologian. Dr. Smith, we are glad to say, treats the questions with which he grapples as a believer in the inerrancy of the Scriptures and in the deity of Christ, our Lord. Hence it is a delight to peruse his work. Here there is no yielding to

the spirit which denies the historicity of the miracles of Christ or of His resurrection. Here there is no willingness to compromise with Modernists by conceding that the virgin birth of our Lord need not be maintained.

Another impressive feature of the book is the acquaintance with the pertinent modern literature which it reveals on almost every page. Professor Smith cannot be accused of having pursued the policy ascribed (some say, falsely) to the ostrich, that of ignoring dangers in the belief that what is not seen does not exist. Antichristian philosophers, such as John Dewey and William Pepperell Montague; radical New Testament scholars, such as Adolf Harnack and E. Renan; and unbelieving scientists, such as J. S. Haldane, are quoted. That the writer has read the works of believing scholars, for instance, those of A. T. Robertson and J. G. Machen, hardly needs particular mention. We are happy to say that the monumental work of our synodical brother Pastor A. Fahling of Detroit, *The Life of Christ*, is represented among the books from which excerpts are inserted.

The longest chapter in the book is the one which dwells on the nature and testimony of the miracles of Christ (chap. IV). The author calls the miracles of Christ "the great battle-ground on which has been waged for centuries the real conflict regarding the reality or non-reality of the supernatural" (p. 109). The treatment of the subject is admirable. A number of important general observations are submitted which help in warding off the attacks of unbelievers, for instance, that Christ's miracles were in the physical realm and could be appraised by the physical senses and that they (at least in numerous instances) were done publicly, in the presence of many witnesses. A part of this chapter is devoted to the examination and refutation of the views of hostile critics. Quite similar is the chapter on the resurrection of Christ (chap. VI). We quote a few of its sentences: "Some will then ask, Well, why don't more men believe in the resurrection, especially some of our outstanding scholars? I think the reason they do not believe is because they do not want to believe, that they have definitely determined not to believe. 'Oh,' you ask, 'do you think any true modern scholar would ever determine in his own mind not to believe in something, however remarkable, if the evidence were clear concerning its reality?' Yes, I believe men will go to such an extreme, because men have gone to this extreme. Let us take, e. g., the testimony of just one contemporary philosopher, Prof. C. E. M. Joad, head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology in Birkbeck College, University of London, since 1930, once John Locke scholar in Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford, and the author of a great many influential volumes in philosophy and religion. Speaking of the resurrection of Christ, Joad, as late as 1933, declares that he will not believe in such an event, no matter what the evidence. These are his own words: 'Even if the evidence were far more impressive than the tatter of inconsistencies, divergencies, and contradictions which is in fact available, I should probably still refuse to credit the fact which it purported to establish.'" Prof. Smith comments: "No matter what the evidence is,

because of his own convictions regarding what ought to be in the universe Professor Joad frankly states that he will never believe, let us repeat his own phrase, 'no matter what the evidence.' (P. 221 f.)

The author would not claim that he has given us an exhaustive essay on the supernaturalness of Christ in which all the aspects of the topic are thoroughly discussed. But what he set out to do, that is, to show that we can still believe in the supernaturalness of Christ, he has accomplished, and we are grateful for this faith-strengthening work.

W. ARNDT

Treasury of David. C. H. Spurgeon's Great Work of a Lifetime Condensed by David Otis Fuller, D. D. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 708 pages (2 volumes), 6¾×9¾. Price, \$6.95.

The famous English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon was not only a great preacher but also a great Bible student and, above all, a great Bible-teacher, who trained hundreds of Gospel-witnesses for mission and ministerial work at home and abroad. Those who study such books as his well-known *Treasury of David*, know why this simple and believing Christian man was an outstanding preacher: his preaching was deeply rooted in constant, profound, and intelligent study of God's Word. As Luther, whom he greatly admired, so also Spurgeon exceedingly loved and diligently used the book of Psalms as believing Israel's divine doctrinal and pastoral theology; and his famous *Treasury of David* consists of brief, pithy, striking notes on the various psalm verses, original and otherwise, always to the point, valuable to the homilist, and presented in clear, chaste, dignified English, which so well becomes the Church and the pulpit. Some one has said that they are the frank, honest notes of a frank, honest Christian. The two-volume edition here offered to all lovers of the Psalms is, of course, a decided abridgement of Spurgeon's original very large work; nevertheless, the two volumes contain over 4,000 separate quotations (over 1,700 by Spurgeon himself) by 720 different writers, most of them eminent Bible students. The work is therefore a valuable practical commentary on the Psalms, which, we are sure, pastors, teachers, and Bible students in general will be eager to possess. It may serve indeed as a fine Christmas or birthday gift for the busy but usually underpaid pastor or teacher. The mechanical equipment of this new *Treasury* is excellent; the binding is in blue cloth, with gilt lettering.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Evangelische Offenbarung. Die Grundlagen der evangelischen Theologie. Von Otto Vilshneider. Verlag C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh. 202 Seiten 6½×9½. Preis: M. 1.50.

Die trefflichen Aussagen über Vernunft und Offenbarung, die sich in diesem Buch finden, haben wir in unserm MONTHLY schon mitgeteilt (Dezember 1940, S. 923). Es finden sich auch wertvolle Untersuchungen der Begriffe צפ, μετανοειν, פִּי' (z. B.: „Aus dem assyrisch-babylonischen idu, das ‚außersehen‘ und ‚auswählen‘ heißt, leitet sich etymologisch das hebräische פִּי' her“). Sonst ist mit unserm Buch nicht viel anzufangen. Einmal ist die Sprache furchtbar schwer verständlich. Über die messianischen Weissagungen z. B. wird so geredet: „In dessen ist dabei eines übersehen worden, nämlich die Eigenart des alttestament-

lichen Offenbarungszeugnisses als genetisch-pragmatische Offenbarung und die Ablösung dieses so gearteten alttestamentlichen Offenbarungszeugnisses eben in diesen messianischen Weissagungen. In allen diesen Aussagen vollzieht sich nämlich die heilsgeschichtlich-prophetische Metamorphose vom pragmatischen Offenbarungszeugnis zum faktisch-personalen Offenbarungszeugnis des Neuen Testaments. Bei dem Schritt von der pragmatischen zur personal-faktischen Offenbarung des Neuen Testaments handelt es sich um ein eminent ethisches Problem, nämlich die Erfüllung des alttestamentlichen Ethos in der faktischen Heilswirklichkeit des Christus." (S. 119.) Der Schlusssatz des Buches lautet: „Die theologische Forschung hat sich stets dessen bewußt zu sein, daß sie unter den Sperrkreis dieses Ichbewußtseins nur Sekundäres darzubieten hat, daß es also primär nicht um das Cogito sum, sondern um das Cogitari fieri geht.“ Sodann gibt unser Buch auf die wichtige Frage „Wo haben wir die Offenbarung?“ („Wenn wir heute das theologische Ringen der Gegenwart ansehen, so steht ja offenkundig die Offenbarungsfrage im Brennpunkt.“ S. 135) die verkehrte Antwort. Dies ist in unserm Leben gewirkte Christuszeugnis.“ (S. 138.) Etwas deutlicher — oder undeutlicher — ausgedrückt: „Der jetzt gegenwärtige pneumatische Christus ist nicht die Ablösung des faktischen Christuszeugnisses des Neuen Testaments, sondern die gegenwärtige Verlebendigung desselben im Lebenszeugnis der Gemeinde und des einzelnen.“ (S. 124.) Auf deutsch: Will man wissen, was Gott uns zu sagen hat, so frage man die Christen; durch ihre Christenerfahrung redet Christus zu uns. Allerdings redet unser Autor öfters so, als sei die Schrift die Quelle, die alleinige Quelle, der Heilserkenntnis. Wir teilen zwei dahinlautende Aussagen mit. „Das Buch, das wir die Heilige Schrift nennen und das uns in der Einheit von Altem und Neuem Testament das Zeugnis göttlicher Offenbarung“ (Sperrschrift von uns) „darbietet, ist die Quelle der theologischen Forschung.“ (S. 58.) „Die biblischen Zeugnisse“ (Sperrschrift von uns) „handeln ja von dem Christus und stellen uns seine Heilswirklichkeiten vor, genetisch-pragmatisch, faktisch und pneumatisch. Aber auch von allen diesen Darstellungen gilt das Pauluswort, daß wir einen Schatz in irdenen Gefäßen haben. Und dennoch ist und bleibt die Schrift die alleinige Quelle und Korrektur des Christustwissens und der theologischen Forschung. Ohne das Schriftzeugnis wäre alles Christustwissen und alle Theologie einer unkontrollierbaren Schwärmerci und Mystik preisgegeben.“ (S. 147.) Will Dilschneider hier sagen, daß die Heilige Schrift die alleinige Quelle der Theologie ist, so durfte er nicht sagen, daß „die Summa theologiae das in unserm Leben gewirkte Christuszeugnis ist“. Wie beide Aussagen zu harmonisieren sind, wissen wir nicht. Der Barthianer weiß es vielleicht. Möglicherweise liegt die Lösung darin, daß die Heilige Schrift als „Zeugnis göttlicher Offenbarung“ angesehen wird. Schließlich hilft aber auch das nichts. Denn wenn die Heilige Schrift alles Christustwissen, das in unserm Leben gewirkte Christuszeugnis, den jetzt gegenwärtigen pneumatischen Christus kontrollieren soll, so muß sie mehr als bloßes „Zeugnis“ sein; sie muß alleinige Autorität haben. Wie die Sachen stehen, läuft der Satz, daß die Summa theologia das in unserm Leben gewirkte Christuszeugnis ist, auf unkontrollierbare Schwärmerci hinaus. Und die Schrift muß es sich gefallen lassen, von dem „pneumatischen Christus“ kontrolliert zu werden. Noch eins: Ist die Heilige Schrift mit Mängeln behaftet („irdene Gefäße“), so taugt sie nicht als Quelle und Korrektur des Christustwissens.

Th. Engelder

Philosophy, Education, and Certainty. By Robert L. Cooke, Ed. D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 392 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$2.75.

This volume by a member of the faculty of Wheaton College is an attempt to combine the study of educational theory with an analysis of its philosophical background and of the bearings of metaphysics on the problem of certainty. The inclusion of "certainty" in the title of the volume raises expectations which are not fulfilled in these chapters, but as an introduction to the history of philosophy from the standpoint of Christian education the book meets a long-felt want. Especially the reading of the chapters on Philosophy Applied to Education, Science and Education, Evolutionism, Dewey, Democracy and the Schools, Progressivism, should prove of the greatest value to the educator who takes his task and profession seriously. There is ample documentation in the footnotes and in the chapter lists of readings, and the criticism throughout is from the standpoint of conservative Christian scholarship.

TH. GRAEBNER

Does the Modern Papacy Require a New Evaluation? By C. B. Gohdes, Litt. D. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 1940. 263 pages. Price, \$2.25.

The author, professor of History at Capital University, states that this book is written "as a protest against the recent breach made in the time-honored relations that have obtained in the past between State and Church. The Church of Rome, through the action of our Chief Executive, has passed from the status of one Church among many to that claimed by it, a Church with special privilege." The reference is, of course, to the sending of Mr. Taylor as the personal representative of the President of the United States to the Vatican in Rome. The object of the book is to show, and to prove by official documents of the Roman Church, what these special privileges are; that the boast of Rome *Semper eadem* is still true; that therefore Rome is today as great a danger to, and an enemy of, Protestantism and of all free institutions in the world as ever. The sum of the author's argument is stated on the last page: "The Pope is not the herald and guardian of the Gospel, not the chief of the apostolate of Calvary, but their perverter. He is not the guardian of the peace of the nations but its disturber; and since he has come to stay, resistance to him by means of disclosing his character should be as enduring as himself."—It is necessary that, periodically, such books be issued; necessary, because actually the situation has not changed as far as the attitude of Rome towards Protestantism is concerned. But the people forget because no bloody action of the Inquisition is reported in the daily news; they think these things belong to the past; it cannot happen now, above all, it cannot happen here; because the Catholic Action is not publishing as part of its official program that the Government of the United States be made subservient to the Papacy, therefore that desire is entirely foreign to the men behind that action. So, despite the fact that most of what this book contains has been said before, it is good that it was put on the market, and it deserves recommendation.—A few alterations would, in the opinion

of this reviewer, improve the book. The author does not always manifest the calm objective outlook of the historian. In a matter which is, to quote Dr. W. H. Greever in the introduction, "delicate, beset with peculiar difficulties," it will answer the purpose better to abstain from impassioned exhibitions of personal feelings and convictions. Excursions like that on the Versailles Treaty serve no good purpose and may defeat the object of the book because they antagonize the reader. The rather superficial treatment and somewhat contemptuous condemnation of the Roman doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity strikes many other Christians as well and controverts the Lutheran Confessions. Moreover, the author's conception of the Roman view of Mary's immaculate conception is altogether incorrect. — A few other mistakes have crept into the text. Page 49, Pius XI should be Pius IX; page 69, "opposite" should be "apposite"; page 204, line 6, something is evidently omitted. The well-known historian of our Synod is not "Professor Dallman of St. Louis." — A topical index would add greatly to the value of the book; and while in general there is sufficient documentation, it is lacking in places where it is specially desirable, *e. g.*, regarding Franco and the Spanish war, p. 92 ff., the Catholic Action, p. 94 ff.

THEO. HOYER

To Live Is Christ. By Emil W. Matzner. The Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. 430 pages, 6×9. Price, \$2.50.

These sermons present a number of good features. They are textual; are homiletically well constructed; short but packed full of thought; have brief introductions that are not commonplace but arouse interest; use an abundance of good illustrations; speak a good, plain English. The preacher knows past history, but he speaks as a man who lives in the present world and who is aware of the needs of his hearers. Being a Lutheran, one expects that his doctrine is Biblical, and one is not disappointed. It may be debated whether at times he takes too much for granted as far as the way to salvation is concerned. In the interest of better preaching we recommend this book of sermons to our pastors.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Two Minutes with God. By Paul J. Hoh and Philip R. Hoh. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 5¾×8¾. Price, \$1.50.

This devotional book, intended to meet the spiritual needs of young children, is exceptionally well planned and written from a pedagogical standpoint. We would enthusiastically recommend this book if it were free from objectionable matter. Not only is there too much moralizing, but there are false statements such as: "Without the Bible it is very, very hard to find God" (p. 20); "God loves them [bad people] and hopes that, because He loves them, they will change and become good" (p. 16). There is only passing reference to the vicarious atonement and the doctrine of justification. Children understand and believe the central doctrine of the Christian faith, and their life of sanctification is not effected by moralizing but is always a result of their faith in justification. Paul J. Hoh is professor at Mount Airy Theological Seminary of the United Lutheran Church.

F. E. MAYER

The Polity of a Lutheran Congregation. By A. Brunn. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1940. Tract No. 133. 32 pages, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. Price, 5 cts. the copy, postpaid; dozen, 48 cts., and postage.

This little tract sets forth the various definitions of the word "church," the relation and the duties of the pastor, the various officers, the voters, the societies toward their congregation. It deserves Synod-wide distribution, careful reading, and conscientious practicing of the principles outlined.

TH. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Convention of the Texas District. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1940. 75 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. Price, 13 cts.

In his essay on "Unionism" Dr. Fritz, after defining unionism as "church union without unity of doctrine," points out that unionism is nothing new in the Church, that the arguments advanced in favor of unionism are specious, that unionism is contrary to Scripture and dangerous to the welfare of the Church, and he finally applies the Scriptural principle to a number of practical questions in reference to unionism. The report on the thirty-five missionary stations in the far-flung territory of the largest State of the Union, and particularly the report on the difficult and ofttime discouraging work in the Spanish mission among the Mexicans in Texas and in Mexico City, ought to be of general interest.

An overture by a pastoral conference to petition Synod at its convention in 1941 to grant a division of the present Texas District was lost by a vote of 113 to 38.

TH. LAETSCH

Luther-Kalender für Südamerika. — O Lar Christao. — Ev.-Luth. Abreißkalender für das Jahr 1941 mit Andachten und Bibellectionen für jeden Tag. Herausgegeben von der Ev.-Luth. Synode von Brasilien. Casa Publicadora Concordia, Porto Alegre, Brasilien.

Für solche, die mit ihnen bereits bekannt sind, kommen diese drei neuen Kalender wie alte, liebe Freunde. Der „Luther-Kalender“ erscheint bereits im 17. Jahrgang, sein portugiesischer Bruder O Lar Christao im 2. Beide enthalten reichen christlichen Lesestoff, der deutsche etwas mehr als der portugiesische. Beide aber weisen besonders die Laien auf solche synodale Angaben hin, die sie nötig haben, wie Adressen der Pastoren, Gemeinden und Predigtstationen, Synodalbeamte und andere mehr. Im „Abreißkalender“ sind bis in den Oktober hinein die beiden Samuelisbücher Abschnitt für Abschnitt schön ausgelegt und zeitgemäß auf die heutigen Verhältnisse angewandt. Dies gibt dem Ganzen eine innerliche Einheit, die in hohem Maß segenspendend wirken wird. Wer diese drei Kalender bestellt, wird nicht nur Segen für sich ernten, sondern auch unsere Brüder in Südamerika in ihrer fleißigen und treuen Pionierarbeit ermuntern und unterstützen. Gottes Segen ruhe auch auf diesem Zeugnis der Wahrheit!

J. L. Müller

The Seminary Edition of Choruses and Quartets, Classical and Modern, for Male Voices. Edited by Walter Wismar. No. 19: "Christ Lay in Death's Dark Prison." Bach-Heyne. 26 pages, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 10$. Price, 75 cts.