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Book Review. - Literatur

Th. Graebner

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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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 Hope of the Ages. The Messianic Hope in Revelation, in History, and in Realization. By Arno Clemens Gaebelein, D.D. "Our Hope," 456 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y. 187 pages, 5¾×8¼. Price, \$1.00.

The theme of this volume is the hope of the second advent, a subject which requires a profound knowledge of the Scriptures, especially of the prophecies related to the New Testament age. Dr. Gaebelein is one of the leading fundamentalist theologians and like most of these is a millenarian. With much in this volume we must disagree. Dr. Gaebelein terms the belief current at the time of Christ that His return would bring a universal resurrection "unscriptural." He denies that the Papacy is Antichrist. His millennialism is based upon predicating a literal fulfilment for the prophecies in which the spiritual glories of the New Testament Church are being described by Old Testament writers and in Revelation. In spite of the definite reference of Amos 9:11-15 to the New Testament Church vindicated in Acts 15, he refers this fundamental text to a universal conversion of the Jews, with distinctly chiliastic background. Dr. Gaebelein certainly ignores the testimony of history when he calls the amillennialists theological "new-comers." Nor do we believe that it was the chiliastic hope that kept alive the faith of Christendom through the early age of persecution. He gains Scriptural ground for his chiliasm only by importing the idea into texts which bear no such connotation, as when he interprets the sleeping of the five foolish virgins as the Church's loss of the millennial hope (p. 133). Dr. Gaebelein rejects the doctrine of baptismal regeneration (p. 135). He distinguishes a "false chiliasm" from the "true," the false type being exhibited in the Anabaptist movement, and it is to this alone that he refers the condemnation of chiliasm in the Protestant symbols. More than once (Melancthon, p. 145; Milton, p. 151) he cites the belief of Protestant leaders in the Second Coming in support of chiliasm. Dr. Gaebelein does not represent the carnal type of the millennial doctrine, and his book is a valuable source for all who wish to acquaint themselves with modern chiliasm as held by its representatives in the fundamentalist group.

TH. GRAEBNER

The Bible and Things to Come. By David Freeman. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 139 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

Rev. D. Freeman is pastor of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa., and a former student of the late Dr. J. G. Machen, professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, whose views he voices on the eschatological questions which he deals with in the nine sermons presented in his book. The subjects he treats are: "The Second Coming of Christ," "When Will Christ Come?" "The Signs of Christ's Coming," "The Jews, Their Conversion and Their Land," "The Man of Sin," "Will

There Be a Millennium? "After Death — What?" "The Day of Judgment," "The Final State." While the author rejects the millennium because it is taught neither by Scripture nor the Christian Confessions, he believes that "Israel as a nation, in the collective sense, is to be saved before Christ comes" (p. 69), though he holds neither that all Jews will be saved nor that the Jewish converts will return as a nation to the land of Israel. "The Jews will be saved as a nation, but only in the way in which they are converted now" (p. 77). The writer is wrong in stressing the racial or national conversion of the Jews; for just as the "fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25) refers to the elect among the heathen, so the "all Israel" (v. 26) clearly refers to the elect of God among the Jews. He is right, however, in his judgment that insistence upon a literal interpretation of Old Testament eschatological prophecy results in downright absurdities. (Pp. 70, 71.) Regarding the Man of Sin the author rejects the traditional verdict of the Church that Antichrist has been revealed in the Papacy, contending that Antichrist is yet to appear, and this shortly before Christ's second coming, though for his view he can offer no substantial proof. Except for these two points the sermons represent the eschatological doctrines of the general Christian confessions, and their simple, yet thorough doctrinal treatment makes them absorbing and profitable reading. Praiseworthy above all is the author's sanity in expounding prophecy in the light of the clear Scripture-passages; commendable are his acquaintance with, and his emphasis on, the Bible as the sole rule of faith. The reviewer wishes to stress this in spite of the lapses noted above.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Know the Truth. By Rev. Joseph A. Cottam, Ph.D. American Tract Society. 259 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.50.

This book deals with the fundamentals of the Christian religion, summarized on page 110 thus: "A Christ Divine, an Atonement vicarious, and a Bible inspired," and on page 139 thus: "The development of the grand thought of a substitute for the sinner embraces the distinctive truths, the essential doctrines of Christianity; justification by faith, atonement, redemption, imputation, the divinity of the blessed Redeemer, the infinite grace, and the absolute effectiveness of the work done for the deliverance of the transgressors of the divine Law." Much of what is said in these weighty subjects is of great value. But some is of little value and some harmful. Frequently there is a lack of theological precision (see, for instance, the order in which the doctrines are listed in the citation from page 139), and there is a good deal of halting and faltering and floundering. One cannot understand why our author, who believes that "our Lord took up our sins and expiated them on the cross," "reconciled the world by means of reparation, or satisfaction offered," "that every claim of justice has been met and satisfied," could still pen these words: "We have in circulation the idea that Christ died because God was insulted and must punish somebody for it or that the Atonement was the propitiation of an angry God, who let off the rogue while He tortured the innocent." (Chapter VII.) Our author speaks emphatically of "the divinity of the Book," which "is divinely inspired," "the written Word of God," but in chapter XV he makes the fatal concession: "Such minor discrepancies, or errors, are

not worth mentioning as compared with the substantial reliability of the whole records. Dr. Marcus Dods has well said: 'We are not contending for an absolute literal infallibility, for any such discrepancies avail nothing to discredit the true infallibility of the Holy Scriptures.' He rejects "the theory of evolution" and states that "in the first chapter of Genesis the Bible speaks with authority, clearly, and finally on a matter of biology. The words 'after its kind' reveal a sound biological principle," etc. He holds, however, that "slow creation requires God just as much as instantaneous creation. . . . Genesis condenses age-long processes into swift acts, withdraws the mind from intermediate stages, and sums up the whole into 'days' revealing the eternal God as the Fountain of all." (Chap. V.) Chapter VIII, on Repentance, reflects the confusion which Reformed theology has cast about this term. "Repent ye and believe in the Gospel." Our Lord here commands the two things which are required for salvation. The first demand He made on men was the demand to 'repent'; the other was 'to believe.' . . . And "repentance is a thoroughgoing movement of the whole being away from sin and towards the love and service of God." Then we have the statement: "There may be conversion without regeneration" (p. 155), and, worst of all, the statement: "We must consider faith as the exercise of man's freedom in accepting God's grace" (p. 136). In Chapter XVI, "Know that Christ is Coming," we have this fine statement: "Spurgeon used to say, 'There are some people who are so taken up with the second coming of Christ that they forget to preach about the first.'" There are millennialists who speak and preach of nothing but this fabled millennium. Our author avoids this extreme. But he commits this fatal error, common to all moderate millennialists: wrapped up in the glories of the millennium, they have little to say of the glory of heaven. In this whole chapter "heaven" is mentioned but once, incidentally, in a quoted poem. And there is no chapter on heaven. As far as this book knows, the millennium is the final consummation. "The present age is to be followed by 'an age of glory,' when "the saints are to reign with Christ and the rule of Christ and His people will secure immeasured blessedness for the world. . . . We are to look for an era when the true full life of humanity will be realized. This is the age that will dawn at the coming of the King, . . . the recreation of the social order." Finally, we call attention to the statement: "Does our Lord ever ask those who would belong to His kingdom to subscribe to a creed?" (P. 133.) Dr. Cottam is pastor of a community church in Philadelphia, and community churches have no use for "creeds." We are wondering why Dr. Cottam would write a book defending the Apostolic Creed and the creed of the Reformed Church and the creed of the millennialists.

TH. ENGELDER

Naturalism. By James Bissett Pratt. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. 180 pages, including Index, 5½×8½. Price, \$2.00.

This new volume on Naturalism offers the third series of the Powell Lectures on Philosophy at Indiana University, delivered in 1938 by the well-known professor of philosophy at Williams College, its predecessors being *The Lasting Elements in Individualism* (W. E. Hocking) and *In the Spirit of William James* (R. B. Perry). Naturalism, in philosophy, has

been defined as the doctrine which denies all evidence for a spiritual creative and upholding principle and for a universal teleology, explaining the world wholly out of the combination of material elements acting under physical laws. This popular definition of Mechanistic Naturalism (*New Standard Dictionary*) does not adequately describe the empirical Naturalism championed by the author, who in his four lectures presents Naturalism in its fundamental conception, its relation to life and evolution, to mind, and finally to morality and religion. Personally he repudiates the traditional crude and static Naturalism in favor of a more critical, empirical form, which is "always ready to learn." In the end, it is true, Naturalism cares little to learn, since it rejects as impossible all supernatural data and explains the universe in its development and existence merely by impersonal principles. Though tolerant otherwise, the author becomes bitterly sarcastic when he speaks of the "good old days of particular Providences and singing spheres and anthropomorphic deities." (P. 45.) To him man and animal are products of fundamental forces through process of evolution. Disavowing Mechanism and Neo-Lamarckianism as inadequate and inclining personally to Vitalism ("Some force other than the physical and chemical directs the biological activities of the organism and the course of racial evolution," p. 76), he looks upon the universe as an "organic being, dominated by definite tendencies of immanent purpose." (P. 93.) Since the Cosmos is thus "permeated with immanent purpose and is therefore a teleological and also a spiritual organism" (p. 142), crass Materialism must yield to an intelligent Idealism, in which Mind finds both an explanation and justification and in which there is a place for Morality as an evaluation of all "pleasurable consequences" (pp. 158 ff.). So also Religion, rooted in the concept of an organic and teleological universe (p. 175) and finding its "god" in nature ("*Deus sive Natura*"), becomes exceedingly real to the empirical Naturalist, God being the "Real as such." For His reality in this sense there exists "an unanswerable ontological demonstration." Dr. Pratt's lectures are valuable because, on the one hand, they clarify many moot points on the subject and, on the other, assign in Naturalism a place to deity and worship. Of course, the Naturalistic deity is no more than Nature itself and the worship no more than pagan, pantheistic worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Naturalism therefore rejects all true religion and the true God and as such remains unspeakably comfortless and hopeless in its inherent pessimism, thus offering another proof of the total bankruptcy of perverted reason left to itself, without the guidance and strength of divine revelation.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The World Today. A Challenge to the Christian Church. By Alfred M. Rehwinkel, M. A., B. D., Professor of Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 107 pages. Price, 50 cts., postpaid.

Rarely does the title of a book describe its contents so exactly and completely. In these lectures, originally presented to the Atlantic District of the Missouri Synod, the author describes conditions in the world today, comparing them with conditions in the past, reaching out widely into the whole field of World and Church History and drawing there-

from lessons for our consideration as we look forward into the future. The conclusions he draws as he views "The Political and International World, The Social and Economic World, The Religious World" are sometimes encouraging, sometimes alarming, always stimulating. Concordia Publishing House has reissued the essays in an attractive booklet at a low price, which should encourage a wide distribution. A detailed subject index will make it especially useful as a reference for the pastor and lecturer.

THEO. HOYER

Cross-Examined. By Edward Kuhlmann. Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. 95 pages, 5×7½. Price, 85 cts.

Our Great Salvation. The Centrality of the Cross. By W.E. and E.W. Schramm. Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. 109 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

These volumes offer a number of series of Lenten discourses. The central doctrine of the atonement through the blood of Christ is well stressed. The various practical implications for the life of the believer and the appeal to the unbeliever to accept Christ by faith are presented with originality and effect.

Pastor Kuhlmann is widely known for his pleasing and helpful literary productions for young and old. Also his sermons in this volume have a literary flavor. The uniqueness of approach and the extreme wealth of illustrations in these Lenten addresses make them interesting and stimulating for the reader. Doubtless they were so preached by the author. As models for Lenten sermons they will serve only such pastors as can make literary allusion a part of their own personality and can reenforce the rather slender doctrinal core of their special addresses with abundant doctrinal content in congregational preaching, Bible class, and other catechetical work, which no doubt the author utilizes.

Pastor W.E. Schramm, D. D., is senior pastor of St. Mark's Church, Butler, Pa., and has published a number of volumes of sermonic and practical content. His series *Our Great Salvation* offers seven sermons on John 3:16. This is not as much a homiletical *tour de force* as may be imagined; the material is derived from the text, is adequately factual in doctrine, and is organized and applied with a sure hand.

Rev. E. W. Schramm is the editor of the *Lutheran Standard* and has published several volumes of sermons. His series *The Centrality of the Cross* is a workmanlike discussion of the Seven Words. Themes and divisions are in some instances especially adroit.

It is not written in censure of these and similar sermons, for they are well done, but of the use to which many preachers put them, when we say that nothing in the way of cleverness of theme, tenuousness of derivation of material, or originality of elaboration can replace the Gospel minimum particularly in Lenten sermons. The tradition particularly of preaching ever and always on the Passion-story has resulted in a technique of hypercleverness in finding applications which prevents the full use of the opportunities which Lent provides for the preacher. Surely, if ever, then at Lent it should be true of the Christian preacher that he focuses, rather than obscures, the Gospel-message by his homiletic devices.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference, assembled at Chicago, Ill., Aug. 1—6, 1940. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 99 pages, 6×9. Price, 20 cts.

These *Proceedings* contain two splendid doctrinal essays. The first, by Prof. A. Schaller of Thiensville, Wis., treats of "The Brotherhood of Faith" as a gift of God, as a fountain of blessings, and as a sacred responsibility. The members of the Synodical Conference are reminded that the brotherhood of faith, the unity of faith and doctrine which they enjoy, is a gift of the unmerited grace of God, are invited to make full use of the blessings it offers, and are earnestly admonished to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The essay naturally touches upon the spurious brotherhood contrived by unionism. For instance: "During the last few decades they [the Lutheran unionists] have frankly urged the formation of one great united Lutheran brotherhood of faith, as though such an undertaking were a matter of addition and multiplication. Let us help our people to recognize the cheap methods by which most men in sectarian circles strive to bring about their proposed unions. . . . They seem to have no inkling of the fact that God creates the brotherhood of faith. They do not recognize the wondrous miracle that is involved. By adopting a few breezy resolutions, they blasphemously proclaim to the world that they have brought to life a new brotherhood of faith. . . . Fellowship of faith is never a product of human scheming and planning. When God creates in a man the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and when in His mercy He leads him to sever relations with the ungodly or with his associates in a sectarian church-body and to make public confession of his faith with us, then, and only then, may we say that we have won a new brother in faith. In no other way can a God-pleasing union come about." The second essay, by Dr. Th. Laetsch of St. Louis, Mo., treats the doctrine of "The Holiness of God." How many of us have mastered this subject? The essay states: "Very frequently the pastor, the teacher, the layman, does not use this term [the holiness of God] in the fulness of its meaning, perhaps is not even conscious of all it connotes and implies. And just as frequently the hearers do not understand the term in all the unfathomable riches of its significance." So let us study these points: "God's holiness manifests itself in its transcendence over all created things." "God's holiness manifests itself as an ethical quality in His absolute sinlessness and impeccability." "God's holiness manifests itself in creating man in His own image, in demanding holiness of all His creatures, in His threats directed against every form of unholiness and every unholy person, in the temporal and eternal punishment of all sinners," and in this: "He is also the holy and all-merciful Savior, whose holiness is manifested in sanctifying sinners, in finding ways and means to separate, to deliver the sinner from the guilt, the penalty, and the power of sin and thus to make the children of wrath the sons of God and heirs of eternal salvation." (Concluding paragraph.) Make this essay an extension course in your study of theology. It will make you a better theologian and deepen the spiritual life of your hearers.

The Synodical Conference thoroughly studied the question of Lutheran unity. The *Proceedings* contain the report submitted by the Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Church Union, the Missouri Synod resolutions with respect to fellowship (1938), the Sandusky Resolutions (American Lutheran Church, 1938), the Resolutions of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States (1939), and the Resolutions adopted by the Synodical Conference in this matter. From these we quote the following: "That we ask the Missouri Synod not to enter into fellowship (prayer-, altar-, pulpit-fellowship) with the American Lutheran Church until matters now objected to by members of the Synodical Conference have been clarified. . . ." "That the presidents of the four synods be requested to devise ways and means for continuing close cooperation between the different union committees of the Synodical Conference." "All members of the Synodical Conference should feel in duty bound as brethren to watch and pray with those who must bear the responsibility that no steps be taken that might in future lead us away from the Scriptural paths which the Synodical Conference has followed from the days of our fathers."

TH. ENGELDER

Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the Southern Illinois District. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1940. 82 pages, 5½×8½. Price, 12 cts.

At the convention of the Southern Illinois District Dr. H. B. Hemmeter read an essay on "The Evangelical Lutheran Church the True Visible Church of God on Earth" on the basis of Dr. Walther's well-known theses. Dr. Schick read a German paper on "The Duty of Local Christian Congregations to Foster Fellowship," a *résumé* of which in the English language is added.—The District adopted rules and regulations governing the activities of its Board for Missions and a policy of the Home Mission Department as to the care of existing stations, missionary expansion, mission-stations and their financial obligations, and mission-work in the self-supporting congregations, also a policy of the Mission Board in regard to Christian day-schools. These rules may be of interest to mission boards of other Districts. The convention also adopted regulations concerning the Historical Committee, which was created some years ago and whose object is to "collect and carefully preserve the official *Proceedings* of the Southern Illinois District conventions, histories of congregations, and other records and materials pertaining to the history of the District" (p. 68). Every District ought to have a committee of this nature, and, if at all possible, a copy of these records, etc., ought to be sent to our Concordia Historical Institute at St. Louis.

TH. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Southern Nebraska District, 1940. 80 pages, 5¼×8¾. Published as the October, 1940, issue of the *Southern Nebraska District Messenger*. Mr. K. G. Ehlers, Garland, Nebr., circulation manager.

The key-note of the convention of the Southern Nebraska District was stewardship, and therefore the report deals chiefly with this important phase of Christian life. Pastor W. Koenig spoke on the

principles of Christian stewardship, bringing out the background, the meaning, some specific implications, and the motive for, and glory of, Christian stewardship. Pastor August Ficken carried out the thought that Christian stewardship involves the practice of brotherly admonition in a brotherly spirit, the recognition of its importance, sincere prayer to God for true guidance, and a realization that this work of love will be rewarded. Pastor W. Wilkens showed the relationship that exists between stewardship and personal mission-work. All three essays are timely and worth-while efforts.

We note that the Southern Nebraska District, in order to expedite the election of officers, has adopted the following resolutions: "In the afternoon session of the first day Synod shall, by primary ballot, elect suitable candidates for the office of District President. The six highest nominees shall be candidates. Synod shall then, by printed ballot, proceed to the election of a District President from among these candidates. . . . All other officers and standing committees of the District, exclusive of Visitors, shall be elected in the following manner: Synod shall, in the afternoon session of the first day, by ballot, nominate a 'Committee on Nominations,' consisting of three pastors, one teacher, and three lay delegates . . . of Synod."

TH. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Forty-First Convention of the Ontario District. Publishers, Pastors W. O. Rathke and M. C. Weissbach. 55 pages, 6x8.

Our brethren in Canada are carrying on their work of spreading the kingdom of the Prince of Peace while their country is engaged in war and many of their sons are serving in the Army or Navy. Let us remember our brethren in our prayers, and may God hold His protecting hand over His Church and its faithful workers! The address of President F. Malinsky is particularly timely and teaches lessons needed not only in Canada but in our country as well. Dr. J. Theodore Mueller of our Seminary at St. Louis read an instructive essay on "Stones Crying Out against Unbelief," emphasizing the importance of archeology for our Christian faith and confession.

TH. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Eighteenth Convention of the South Wisconsin District. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 52 pages. Price, 11 cts.

Besides the routine business of the District, this report contains the first two theses of Pastor Theo. Gohlke's essay on "The Relation of Sanctification to Justification and Its Implications." Other theses presented were those on the nature of justification and sanctification.

TH. LAETSCH

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, London, and Edinburgh:

The Minister's Annual. Volume XIII. Compiled and edited by Joseph McCray Ramsey. 576 pages, 5½x8½. Price, \$2.00.

From the United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia:

He Started from Nowhere, and Other Stories. By W. R. Siegart. 189 pages, 5½x8. Price, \$1.00.