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Book Review. - Literatur

P. E. Kretzmann

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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.

How Firm a Foundation. A Survey of the New Testament and the Birth and Establishment of Christianity in the Light of Archeology and Secular History. By James C. Muir. National Publishing Co., Philadelphia. 1941. 292 pages, 6×8¼.

This book is just what its subtitle says, for it offers, in 21 chapters, some of the best information, both from the Scriptures and from secular sources, on the life and times of Jesus, the Messiah, and of the early Church. Unlike most books of this type, it does not quote extensively from the Biblical text but brings its account in short form, ably summarized, with sufficient documentation for all average students of the New Testament and of the era of the early Church. Some of the finest chapters, outside of those describing the life of the Savior, which occupy most of the book, are those on the imperial and the provincial rulers of those days. The general excellence of the book is so striking that one will hardly notice minor *naevi*, as when the author says that the word *ecclesia*, meaning a "summoned assembly," is used invariably of the Christian Church in the New Testament. But compare Acts 19:41. The statement that "the Twelve became seventy" (p.126) is misleading, to say the least; for the latter formed a different group from that of the apostles. The statement (p.143) that Jesus proclaimed the "ultimate solution—a common brotherhood of men working toward the highest in human destiny, with universal devotion to Divine Will," is definitely inadequate in view of the fact that the Lord Himself states the purpose of His coming, Luke 19:10. But apart from such aberrations the book is excellent for both pastors and teachers of every type.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Theopneustia. The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. By L. Gaussen, D. D. Translated into English by David D. Scott (Glasgow). The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 843 N. Wells St., Chicago, Ill. 365 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.00.

In view of the fact that today, both grossly and subtly, the doctrine of Biblical inspiration is being assailed in nearly all church circles, true Christian believers, still professing verbal and plenary inspiration, owe a debt of gratitude to the Bible Institute Colportage Association (Moody) for presenting Gaussen's famous monograph on Biblical inspiration in a new reprint. Prof. L. Gaussen, born 1790 in Geneva, Switzerland, first served Reformed Protestantism as pastor of a church near his native city. Here he inveighed against the indifferentism and secularism of his age so frankly, firmly, and unceasingly that at last he was deposed from his office by the liberal Swiss *consistoire*. Together with Merle d'Aubigné, Gaussen thereupon founded the Evangelical Society with its conservative theological seminary for the preservation of traditional Cal-

vinistic doctrine, serving this school as professor of theology till his death in 1863, a fearless, consistent defender of the faith to the end. A brilliant preacher and a recondite scholar, he wrote a number of valuable books in defense of Holy Scripture, among which *Theopneustia*, published first in Geneva, 1840 (2d edition, 1842), proved itself the most popular, especially after it had been translated into English by Dr. D. Scott of Glasgow, Scotland. While the book suffers from the faults of all works which are reproduced by photographic process and translated from a foreign language into English (and that over half a century ago); and while the reader may not agree with every statement and would perhaps rather see at times more adequate definitions, as also perchance entire restatements, Gaussen's *Theopneustia* nevertheless remains the classic Reformed monograph on verbal and plenary inspiration, written at a time when the Bible was commonly rejected as a most faulty human work (just as it is today by Dr. Buttrick and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America), little worthy of serious study. Dealing with so many and various enemies of the Book and desiring to serve both the learned and the unlearned, Dr. Gaussen put into his book about every essential that can be said on Biblical inspiration, both positively, in stating the doctrine, and negatively, in defending it against the attacks of unbelieving critics. The basic theme which he proves is that the orthodox Christian Church has always believed in, and confessed, verbal and plenary inspiration (for which he adduces copious proof from the Church Fathers), and that, wherever men attacked Biblical inspiration, it was done by heretical opponents of the *sola gratia*, who, in the interest of their false doctrine, attacked also the *sola Scriptura*. The book is divided into seven chapters: "Definition of the Theopneustia, or Divine Inspiration"; "Scriptural Proof of the Divine Inspiration"; "Brief Didactic Sketch of the Doctrine"; "Examination of Objections"; "Examination of Evasions"; "On Sacred Criticism in the Relations It Bears to Divine Inspiration"; "Conclusion." In the fore part of the book are given an "Alphabetical Index of Contents," a "Scripture Index," and an "Analysis of the Contents of Each Chapter," the last an excellent, minute survey of the chapter contents. The print is rather fine, but since there are wide margins and good chapter divisions, the reading is not too hard on the eyes. Just a few lines to show the author's way of presenting his thoughts. He writes in the "Retrospect": "Inspiration is a fact; and that fact, if attested by God, becomes to us a dogma. But it is the Book that is inspired; it is with the Book that, above all things, we have to do, and not with the writers. We might almost dispense with believing the inspiration of the thoughts, while we could not dispense with that of the language. If the words of the Book are God's words, of what consequence to me, after all, are the thoughts of the writer? Whatever his mental qualifications, what proceeded from his hands would always be the Bible: whereas, let the thoughts be given him, and not the words, and it is not a Bible that he gives me, it is only something more than a sermon." We recommend the book to our pastors for careful study. J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Drama of Our Religion. By Alfred Graham Baldwin. Oxford University Press. New York, London, Toronto. 253 pages, 5¼×8½. Price, \$2.50.

"Mr. Baldwin has helped hundreds of students of high-school age find answers to the many and always perplexing questions about religion," so the jacket informs us. In the introduction the author writes: "It is hoped that parents who want to give their children an understanding of the Bible that is consistent with the thought of our times will find this book helpful. It may suggest to them new and meaningful ways of interpreting old and familiar passages and stories." (P. X.) Note the word "suggest." In the foreword Baldwin tells us: "Education in the field of religious thought has too often been dominated by the effort to impose a point of view or inculcate a set of beliefs. This has been unfortunate because such an approach has antagonized many intelligent students and has retarded the development of religious thinking. The material included in this study is both descriptive and interpretative. It is, of course, the point of view and approach of one person and should be evaluated as such; for indoctrination of ideas and beliefs is not the aim." (P. V.) Yet, though the author seems to be horrified at the idea of an "indoctrination of ideas and beliefs," though he merely "suggests," his manner of presenting his "views" is so suggestive and his "approach" so cocksure that one cannot see the difference between the "suggestions" of the author and the "efforts to impose a point of view or inculcate a set of beliefs" he finds so dangerous. Listen to him: "The early books of the Bible should not be taken at their face value. . . . The first few stories of the Bible are mythical and allegorical." (P. 33.) "The attributing of the various plagues to the direct intervention of a god offers difficulty to any one whose knowledge of modern science gives him a different concept of cause and effect. But we must remember that these stories were not written in a scientific era." (P. 49.) Regarding the Carmel scene, 1 Kings 18, the author informs us: "To interpret this story literally is to miss its point and lose its meaning." (P. 85.) In the time of Elisha, "Jehovah was at this stage in Hebrew thought a tribal God and a territorial one." (P. 87.) On the baptism of Jesus we read: "There is ample justification for feeling that Jesus went to be baptized by John because he agreed essentially with what the prophet had to say, because he wanted to dedicate himself publicly to this cause, and because his own inherent humility of spirit made him feel the need for repentance. Is it too much to believe that this man who taught others to pray for forgiveness felt at times that he himself had fallen short of his ideal? Any other interpretation of this act of consecration, demanded by John of those who came to him, seems to suggest an insincerity in Jesus that is alien to his character." (Pp. 179, 180.) Concerning the gospels he writes: "We wish that they were free of all possible bias and error, but like all great works of literature these gospels leave us with questions that can never be completely answered." (P. 244.) St. John's gospel "is far more philosophical and is evidently an effort to weave together Greek thought and the Christian message." (P. 245.)

Suggestions? Points of view? Opinions? Certainly. And all with-

out the slightest foundation in fact; yet any one who will not take kindly to them lacks "knowledge of modern science," forgets that the authors of the Bible were "living in a prescientific era" (p. 234), "fails to read the Bible intelligently" (pp. 240, 246), suffers from "literal-mindedness and lack of imagination" (p. 132). "Indoctrination of ideas and beliefs"? Nothing is farther removed from the mind of the author. But if you still cling to your old-fashioned view of the Bible and Jesus, if you persist to remain so unscientific, well, that is just too bad for you!

The author boasts of being scientific, yet not one of his arguments has a foot to stand on. He deliberately changes the records to suit his imagination or omits altogether certain indisputable facts narrated in the Bible. The period of the patriarchs is summarized in the following words: "Under strong leadership a band of nomads forced their way into a strip of land that was being fought over by many tribes. Against great obstacles they maintained a hold in this territory and increased in numbers and in strength." (Pp. 42, 43.) These are called important facts; yet we have rarely met with a more thoroughgoing perversion of facts. The author evidently knows how to use his imagination in reading the Bible. But is that a scientific approach? He ignores the greatest fact of history, the resurrection of Christ. Christ died.

The author speaks of new ways suggested by him of interpreting old passages. His is, however, not a new interpretation. His are the age-old, oft-times refuted arguments of unbelief dressed up in modern form. There is not an argument which has not been advanced before by such men as Wellhausen, De Wette, Ingersoll, Paine, the old pagan philosophers. And the author uses the same age-old, unfair methods of misrepresenting the position of Bible believers so often used by enemies of the Christian religion. Only one example: "In 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, a dramatic conflict occurred between a group who wanted science free to teach what it had discovered, and another group who wanted to safeguard certain religious beliefs. This was the so-called 'Monkey Trial,' and it aroused popular interest throughout the Western world. At this trial Clarence Darrow and Henry Fairfield Osborne spoke in defense of the theory of evolution. William Jennings Bryan spoke against it, claiming that such a hypothesis could not be true unless the Bible contained it. Since the Bible said nothing about evolution the theory must be false." (Pp. 11, 12.)

Bryan was not guilty of such silly twaddle. It seems that unbelief does not shrink from gross misrepresentation if that serves its purpose. Why should unbelief be afraid to garble the words of man if it does not fear to falsify the word of the living God? Ingersoll openly professed his agnosticism; modern unbelief chooses to call itself a "new meaningful way of interpreting old and familiar passages and stories." Is that honest?

TH. LAETSCH

Medical Work of the Knights Hospitalers of Saint John of Jerusalem.
By Edgar Erskine Hume, Lieutenant-Colonel, Medical Corps,
United States Army. The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.
371 pages. Price, \$3.00.

Material for the study of the great spiritual orders organized in connection with the Crusades is not plentiful. The present volume, a pub-

lication of the Institute of the History of Medicine of the Johns Hopkins University, is therefore a welcome addition, sketching the history of the Knights of St. John from the time of the founding of the order between 1048 and 1070, through their activity during the Crusades, their removal to the Island of Rhodes in 1306, to Malta in 1530, to the present time; for this is the only one of the three great orders still in existence; the Knights Templars were suppressed in 1312 and the Teutonic Knights dissolved in 1525. — The title speaks of the medical work of the Knights; it is nevertheless a history of the order, for that was the object of the order, to care for "our lords the sick." They were the ancestors of the Red Cross, the first to provide organized medical care on the battle-field. The author has gleaned many interesting particulars from widely scattered documents. Already at the time of the Crusades (ca. 1160) the order had in Jerusalem a hospital accommodating 2,000 patients. There is at that time the first reference in history to beds being provided for patients. The Knights provided a bed for each patient; did not crowd two or three into one bed, as was the custom. The Knights were the leaders in the study of anatomy, for which purpose the bodies of all the Knights were used. — 130 interesting pictures are included; one of them the "first photograph" of a mummified hand, alleged to be the "hand that baptized Jesus," the right hand of John the Baptist. While that picture does not exactly arouse us to ecstasy, as it does the present (the 76th) Grand Master of the order, Prince Ludovico Chigi-Albani Della Rovere, still it is interesting. — At times the religious connection of the order is evident in the shade of an account; sometimes it interferes a little with historic accuracy. The suppression of the Templars is passed over in two sentences; the reason given is the demoralization of the order — which is by no means certain; and the statement that their whole property was transferred to the Hospitalers is the truth — but not the whole truth! That was indeed the order given when (presumably on the basis of a preelection understanding between Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V) the order was dissolved; but Philip and the Pope had already confiscated their share of the order's possession when that order was promulgated!

THEO. HOYER

How to Discuss the Story. Junior I (515 pages) and Intermediate I (550 pages), 5½×7¾. By M. Reu. Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O. Price: Each \$2.00.

In these volumes, which here appear in a revised edition, Dr. Reu shows how Bible-stories may be effectively told with an interweaving of the necessary explanatory remarks and appropriate applications. The stories treated in these two volumes are the same. There are 52 chapters, one for every Sunday. Periodically, approximately after a series of five chapters, a review chapter occurs, the respective Sunday's lesson being devoted to a review of the series. The church-year is followed in the selection of the stories. For the time before Pentecost most of the selections are taken from the New Testament. For the Trinity Sundays the material is largely taken from the Book of Genesis. The arrangement of the chapters is simple. In the first place, the Scripture-passages in which the story to be discussed is found are indicated. Next follows

a section which has the heading "Explanatory Remarks." In the third place, there is a reference to another work by Dr. Reu, having the title "How I Tell." The fourth and last section is entitled "Discussion of the Story." Naturally the second and the fourth sections really give us the contents of these books, the first and third being merely formal. We have read a number of the chapters with pleasure and satisfaction. The explanatory remarks are pertinent and help one to understand the narrative. In the section called "Discussion of the Story" we have chiefly questions to be asked by the teacher, to which, wherever necessary, further explanatory remarks are added. The treatment of the Bible-stories is characterized by reverence and simplicity of style. To give the readers an idea of the method followed, we at random quote a few sentences from the chapter entitled "How Jesus Healed the Man Sick of the Palsy Both in Body and Soul" (15—First Sunday in Lent). In the volume called *Intermediate I* (p.137) these helpful comments are found in the "Explanatory Remarks": "To understand this story rightly, one must know how houses used at that time were built. Each house consisted of a long quadrangle with a flat roof, just as most of our shops are built even today. Usually they had only one story; hence in the cool of the evening the family often repaired to the roof. Thither men also retired to pray (2 Kings 23:12; Jer. 19:13; Acts 10:9). Booths were often erected on housetops for the Feast of Tabernacles. The house itself consisted of two or three rooms. Upon entering, one came first into the forecourt, that is, into a large room, which was shut off from the outside by walls, but was only partly covered by a roof. From the forecourt a door led into the living-room, from which one usually could pass into the adjacent inner rooms. The living-room received its light from two windows, which did not open toward the street nor toward the interior court, but upon the forecourt. Windows usually consisted of latticed openings in the walls. The living-room, as well as both inner rooms, was covered with a flat roof, which was supported by heavy beams and consisted of two layers, the lower one consisting of joists of wood covered with brushwood, the upper one usually of clay or mud mixed with chopped straw, which was beaten or trodden down until it was solid and then kept rain-proof by means of a stone roller. At times the upper layer was made of tiles specially prepared for the purpose (Luke 5:19). From the forecourt, which was paved, steps or a regular staircase led to the roof." In the fourth section ("Discussion of the Story," p.143) these are the sentences pertaining to the explanatory remarks just submitted: "Who will describe a Jewish house of that period? I shall draw a plan of a Jewish house on the board. Here you see that it consisted in a long rectangle. Into how many parts was it separated? The large room in front we call the forecourt. A door led from the street into this forecourt. Here were the walls, the floor was paved with clay or tile, the roof covered only a part of the space enclosed by these walls; from the rest of it one could see the blue sky above. What name shall we give the second room? How did it receive light? What was adjacent to the living-room? How did one reach the roof? What do you know about the roof and how it was built? For

what was the roof used?" Etc. These excerpts will give the reader an idea of the helpfulness of these volumes and show how well adapted they are for use by our Sunday-school teachers as they prepare for their blessed work.

W. ARNDT

Preaching from the Bible. By Andrew W. Blackwood. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 247 pages, 8×5½. Price, \$2.00.

Why this book appeals to me and why I recommend it to our preachers is expressed in the last sentence of the author's foreword and in the opening sentence of his first chapter. These sentences read: "The Bible should ever be our supreme book about preaching, and the Holy Spirit should be our Teacher." (Foreword, p.9.) "The theory which undergirds this book is that the Bible should be the basis of the minister's pulpit work." (15.)

Professor Blackwood, an instructor in homiletics at the Princeton Theological Seminary, has given us a book on the art of preaching written along unusual lines. A preacher, he says, must know his Bible, the needs of his people, and how to preach. A preacher ought to be eager to lay his hands on any book that will help him to improve his pulpit work. Doing so, he will not come under the condemnation of the preacher of whom the chairman of a committee in quest of a pastor said, as quoted in the foreword by Professor Blackwood, "Our people loved our former minister, but they soon grew weary of his sermons. Every year, after the first few weeks in the fall, he seemed to be all preached out." (7.) In a recent article in one of the magazines it is said that millions of people are turning to various religious cults and are cheerfully paying their money for what is offered them because the churches have failed to offer them soul-satisfying spiritual food. A church which preaches the Bible will not come under such a terrible indictment. But let us not lose sight of the fact that preaching may be Biblical, and yet the preacher may not be able to say with Paul, "I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God.*"

J. H. C. FRITZ

Have You Met These Women? By Harold John Ockenga. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 146 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

The author, a Presbyterian, the pastor of Park Street Church, Boston, Mass., has written a number of books from the fundamentalist viewpoint. He is a firm believer in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, and the vicarious atonement. It is one of the few books published in recent times that correctly interprets Gen. 1:4 as the confession of Eve that she has "gotten a man, the Lord." There are many other passages of great beauty and many practical applications of well-known texts. Unfortunately the author's statements are not always reliable, not only not where his Reformed viewpoint causes him to deviate from Scripture. What shall we make of a passage like this: "True, those sufferings were substitutionary. He was the lonely Sufferer, the One suffering for the many. It was a sufficient atonement. It was One suffering for all, universal in kind. It was efficacious. He will save those for whom He died" (p.145) or of his

theory that the six days are six periods of indefinite length (pp. 80, 81)? The author, however, errs also in linguistic explanations and historical facts. There is not the remotest connection between the name Jah or Jehovah and the names of Abram changed into Abraham and of Sarai changed into Sarah (p. 38). There is no evidence of that "very heart-breaking scene between these two lowly lovers of Nazareth, Joseph kindly but firmly making an accusation and wrongfully deciding that he could never have Mary as his wife, hurt though this terrible fact did. We may assume that it was on account of this that Mary took her trip to Elisabeth in the hill country of Judah" (p. 138). Similar unwarranted assumptions are found throughout the book. The doctrine of the immaculate conception was not pronounced in 1879 (p. 135) but on December 8, 1854. The old pagan enemy of Christianity was Celsus and not Celcus (so twice on p. 137). The word for create is *bara*, not *barak* (p. 82). — Any one able to select the wheat from such chaff may find the book usable.

TH. LAETSCH

Lutheran Book of Prayer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 214 pages, 5¾×4. Price: Paper covers, 30 cts.; cloth covers, 50 cts.; cloth, gilt edges, 85 cts.; leather covers, \$1.75. Special zipper carrying case, black or white, \$1.00.

A new little book of prayers to meet present conditions and needs has been put on the market by our Publishing House. It contains four sets of prayers for every day of the week, prayers for church holidays, prayers pertaining to church and worship, to national affairs, and for special occasions in the family circle; also prayers at table, selected psalms, the Nicene Creed, the general confession of sins, and Luther's Small Catechism. It is quite complete and well done. Pastors should call the attention of their members to this new prayer-book and urge them to use it daily. Prayer is a great Christian privilege. Let us encourage its use.

J. H. C. FRITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

Life Everlasting. Our Hope of the Resurrection. Daily Devotions, April 14 to June 1, 1941. No. 31. By R. T. Du Brau. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 63 pages. Price, 5 cts. per copy, postpaid; 48 cts. per dozen, postage extra; \$3.00 per hundred, postage extra.

Gottes Bruennlein. Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 14. April, Ostermontag, bis zum 1. Juni, Pfingsten, 1941. By Friedrich A. Hertwig. Same price as above.

The Seminary Edition of Choruses and Quartets, Classical and Modern, for Male Voices. No. 20: "Why, My Soul, Art Thou So Vexed?" Ps. 42:6. By Mendelssohn-Mertz. 2 pages. Price, 10 cts. — No. 21: "Glory to God." By Stein-Mertz. 6 pages. Price, 20 cts. — No. 22: "Behold the Lamb of God." By Weeber-Mertz. 4 pages. Price, 15 cts. — No. 23: "In Thee, O Lord, My Trusting Soul Reposes." By Klein-Mertz. 3 pages. Price, 10 cts.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, N. Y.:

What God Says. By Joseph Addison Richards. 96 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.