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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.

Bypaths in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader. By Kenneth S. Wuest. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. 124 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

This is a rather unique book, designed to lead the English reader into a study of the New Testament, particularly to reveal hidden beauties of Christian doctrine by setting forth the exact meaning of the text as interpreted on the basis of the Greek original. Dr. Wuest, who teaches in Moody Bible Institute, takes up such ideas as "Lord," "love," "election," "kenosis," and also terms more rarely treated, as "stephanos," "parousia," and others. Coming from a Reformed writer, the following remark on election seems worth quoting: "Salvation is a work of God from start to finish. And yet it is true that each lost sinner must by an act of his will place his faith in the Savior. He has that responsibility. 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you' (John 15:16), is sublimely true. But 'whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely' (Rev. 22:17), is also true. We cannot reconcile or understand these things, but we can trust God for them and believe them." There is a fine discussion of the verb "to foreknow." The doctrine of the Atonement is given its Biblical definition, while we cannot agree with the idea of Christ's humiliation (Phil. 2:5-8) here presented. There is a useful index to Scripture references.

TH. GRAEBNER

Christian Dogmatics. By Prof. Franz Pieper, D. D. Translated by Prof. Walter Albrecht, Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill. Published by the Concordia Supply Co., Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill. Three volumes, cloth covers, 11×8½; 353, 329, 327 pages. Price, \$3.00 per volume, postpaid.

Here is Dr. Pieper's classic in an English dress, well-fitting and becoming Dr. Pieper. And it is the complete Pieper, only, says the translator, "of Pieper's footnotes I embody whatever I deem of value to the busy pastor. The proof-texts are, as a rule, written out to make the Scriptural basis of all dogmatic assertions the more evident." The thanks of our Church are due the translator for the tremendous labor expended, to the Concordia Mimeographing and Supply Company, which assumed the financial risk, and to Prof. W. H. Behrens for his accurate proof-reading. This English *Christian Dogmatics* was prepared for class use in the Springfield Seminary, but there are others who will profit by its use, and not only those who are not able to read and study Pieper's work in the original German.—Our pastors and teachers are certainly to be congratulated: a rich lore in the field of dogmatics has been made available to them. They start out with the Catechism and a number of fine catechetical helps. Then they have at their disposal Prof. E. Koehler's

Summary of Christian Doctrine. From this they graduate into Dr. J. T. Mueller's *Christian Dogmatics*, largely or, we might say, entirely, based on Pieper. That whets their appetite for more of Pieper—and here you have all of it. Only in English indeed; but many a reader will feel the urge to read Pieper in his own inimitable style and may perchance treat himself to both the German and the English edition. He will not lose thereby.—Our edition is only a mimeotype. But even in that humble garb it is a joy and a treasure.

The review of Dr. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* in the *THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1924, p. 271 ff., said: "The entire volume [third], like the two preceding it, is a conscientious effort to reproduce God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure, and also in this volume the guiding influence of Luther's labors in the domain of dogmatics is unmistakable—certainly a feature reflecting credit on the oft-despised Luther and on the faith and courage of Dr. Pieper. . . . His work will go down to future generations as the dogmatic standard, alongside of the works of Walther and his earlier colleagues, of the Missouri Synod. . . . The pastoral conference of the Central District of the Missouri Synod, in regular session at Fort Wayne, Ind., on June 25, 1924, went on record asking for the speedy preparation of an English edition of this work." Perhaps some conference will in the course of years ask for a *printed* edition of Albrecht's translation, complete *with all the footnotes.* TH. ENGELDER

The Christian Attitude toward War. By Loraine Boettner. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1940. 119 pages, 7½×5¾. Price, \$1.00.

We have here the Scriptural answer to the question whether the Christian may and must support his government in waging a just war. "Nor is there anything in the New Testament to indicate that a soldier could not also be a good Christian. . . . Here [in Rom. 13:1-7] we are taught that it is the duty of the State to maintain law and order, if need be, by the sword." (P. 38 f.) That is the Lutheran answer. See Luther's *Ob Kriegsleute auch in einem seligen Stande sein koennen* (X, p. 488 ff.). Fine answers to other important questions are given. For instance: "If the citizen is not able to determine for himself whether or not the war is just, he should obey the order from his government just as he would obey an order from the courts in civil affairs, realizing that as a private citizen he may not be in possession of all the important facts. . . . If the citizen is convinced that the particular war into which his country is about to enter is morally wrong, it becomes his duty to protest to the proper governmental authorities . . . and refuse to take any further part in what he believes to be the mass murder of his fellow-men." (P. 69 f.) And this: "In this connection it should be remembered that not the individual conscience but the full system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures is the final authority for both faith and practice. . . . Neither the moral judgment nor the conscience is infallible as to what is ultimately right or wrong. To find that out we must go to the Scriptures." (P. 80 f.) And this: "Political pronouncements, particularly those having to do

with the defense of the country, are entirely out of place when coming from church courts or from individual church-leaders.' . . . There are few things which can more quickly bring the good name of the Church into justified disrepute than for her to presume to dictate in matters which are outside of her lawful sphere." (P. 77.) And finally this: "War as a judgment on nations. . . . The marvel is, not that God has brought some nations to judgment through war, but that in His mercy He has granted such long periods of peace and has allowed so many nations to escape these horrors for such a long time." (P. 100.)—When our author discusses matters on which Scripture sheds no light, his judgments carry, of course, only the weight of his personal opinion. His judgments on questions of political expediency, such as "the democratic way of life" or as to whether "short military service" serves the state better than "the long-term professional army," and his evaluation of events in contemporary history hardly belong in a theological treatise. We wonder on whose authority he states that "most of the Christians in Germany are in concentration camps." (P. 86.) This means that we do not subscribe to everything stated in this book. But very much of the theological part of it gives good information on the burning question of the Christian attitude toward war.—The author has, as some of our readers know, written that valuable treatise "*The Inspiration of the Scriptures.*"

TH. ENGELDER

He Opened the Book. By Teunis E. Gouwens, D.D. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 187 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

Dr. Gouwens's aim in writing this book was "to inspire a return to the Bible on the part of both preacher and people." We find many arguments for such a return in this book and many good suggestions on the proper study of the Bible. We heartily subscribe to such statements. "In order to present this Word of God to the world's need, the preacher must himself be steeped in it. He will not be able to show the way of triumph over the forces that exalt themselves against God unless he himself brings 'into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'" (P. 39.) "How necessary a working knowledge of the original languages of Scripture is, it is hard to say. My personal opinion is that one should be very loath to let Greek go. . . . And it would be an excellent thing if, without consuming too much time, our seminaries could provide their students with enough knowledge of the Hebrew to give them an introduction to, and a more adequate understanding of, the form and spirit of the Old Testament." (P. 137.) "Topical preaching can be very effective and helpful. But like any other preaching, it depends for its variety and power largely on its use of Biblical material. Unless one continually feeds his mind with Scriptural food, he is apt to revert too often to some pet theme." (P. 184.) The book abounds with similar helpful suggestions, illuminating remarks, and thought-provoking statements.

The Bible, however, to which the author urges us to return, is not the Bible in its present form but the Bible as scientific research has revised and rewritten it. "This does not mean that evolution is to be

made a target of ridicule. Most of us feel that many of its contentions must be admitted. We do not feel, however, that its proofs in any way invalidate the majestic statement with which the Bible opens: 'In the beginning God.' If science convinces us that evolution is one of the methods by which God works, we shall not quarrel with that conclusion. Nor shall we hesitate to incorporate this truth in our pulpit teaching. Let us always remember, however, that our standard of judgment is not the latest pronouncement of a scholar but the truth as it is in Jesus. Any account of this universe which ignores Christ is inadequate and misleading." (P. 16.) "Some people think that a higher critic is always hostile, that his purpose is always to destroy, and that his attitude to the Bible and to Christians is one of cold superiority. It is seldom so. The critics are scientific in their work, and, like true scientists in other realms, they are concerned to find the truth. The higher critics are our friends and not our foes." (P. 142 f.) "We pay our respects to the scholars who have given us a new appreciation of the genius which pervades the sacred page." (P. 143.) Very significant is his warning, p. 145: "Fourthly, never ridicule a rejected interpretation. Do not join those who see in Noah and Jonah only themes for vulgar jests and college songs. It may be that the thing you are ready to discard is very precious to certain of your hearers. Then be careful how you proceed. If you cannot be a tender surgeon, you have no business being a surgeon at all." (P. 145.) In other words, cut out whatever does not agree with your reason, but cut it out so tenderly that the patient does not realize that something very precious is being taken away.

At times the author speaks very beautifully and correctly on the work of Christ. "The personality of Christ dominates the sacred page. Or as Luther has it, 'The Bible is the crib in which Jesus Christ is laid.' 'In the Volume of the Book it is written of Me.' There is the secret of the beauty and the power of this holy record. And it must likewise be the central theme of the sermon. As Cotton Mather put it, "Your sermon must always be such that you may hope to have the blood of your Savior sprinkled on it and His good Spirit breathing in it." (P. 166 f.) Yet when we read: "Many years ago, when I was a student at Union Seminary and we had just been studying the Virgin Birth, I asked Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick if I should use that theme for my Christmas sermon and discuss the arguments for and against that doctrine. His reply, immediate and emphatic, was, 'No, preach the strongest sermon you can on Jesus Christ.' It was wise counsel" (p. 166); and when we read: "Jesus Christ is the superlative religious character in the history of the world. He revealed God by His teaching and His life, and He made Him known as the Father whose redeeming love is as powerful as it is enduring. The supreme thing about Jesus is that God was in Him, 'reconciling the world unto Himself.' This is our Gospel. This is the message of our Book. This is the good news we are ordained to preach" (p. 167 f.), — when we read this, we wonder whether the author's Christ, like Fosdick's, is, after all, no more than a mere man, a social reformer.

TH. LAETSCH

The Joyful Mystery. Devotional meditations on the events connected with the first Christmas. By William C. Skeath. Illustrated by Harold J. Minton. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1940. 150 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

While this review will not reach our readers in the season in which the publishers desired to have it appear, we have no doubt that one or the other of our pastors will take note of the title and contents of this little work by Pastor Skeath, who is serving a Methodist church in Norristown, Pa. The meditations offered here discuss the infancy narratives pertaining to our Lord as they are found in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The material is grouped under three heads: Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. The aim is to bring before the reader once more the blessed narrative giving us the account of the birth of our Savior and to embellish it with appropriate selections from modern poetry as well as with pen-drawings depicting scenes and persons connected with the story. We are happy to see that the author accepts the Bible doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ. When he discusses the meaning of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, a hesitating note is struck. He inquires as to the significance of "peace on earth" proclaimed by the angels. He asks these questions suggested to him by the distressing world situation, "Have we, by some strange mischance, misinterpreted the joy in these shepherd hearts at the news of the coming Savior? For what kind of Savior were they hoping? A Savior from their sins? from their poverty? from their arduous toil? from the social distinctions which chained them in castes? This is an open question, not by any means settled conclusively in the minds of many." He has to admit: "Racial discrimination has not passed, industrial inequality has not disappeared, economic conflict still rages, the poor are still despised by the haughty, and castes still rule the world." (P. 84 f.) The author seems to misunderstand the meaning of the angels when he says: "Yet surely these angels could not have sung so joyfully had they not known that human brotherhood was making its beginning with the coming of this Child." (P. 85.) Why is it so difficult for preachers of our age to understand that the peace which Christ brought to the world is the "peace which passeth all understanding," the great reconciliation between God and the world? If the collapse of the present order of things and the inability of our civilization to save itself teach anything, it certainly is the great lesson that the gifts which Christ has earned for us and which God bestows in the kingdom of His Son here on earth are not temporal but spiritual gifts, "not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. 14:17. W. ARNDT

Our Bible. By Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, M. A., S. T. D. St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House. 95 pages, 5×7½. Price, 35 cts.

This pamphlet is, in effect, a reprint of Bible lessons which were offered in the *Concordia Bible Student* during the year 1940, with certain extensions and an introduction by the Rev. A. C. Mueller. Its twelve chapters are in the form of outline studies for Bible lessons, home study, and private devotion. The value of the book is enhanced by questions

for study and discussion. Pastors and Bible-class teachers who know how to adapt this great mass of subject-matter to their individual circumstances will be able to derive much benefit from the study and use of this pamphlet.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Learning to Know the Child. An Introduction to Child Study. By Ad. Haentzschel, Ph. D., Professor of Philosophy, Valparaiso University. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 86 pages, 5×7½. Price, 25 cts. Together with an *Instructors Guide* and *Test Sheets* for the use of pastors and institute leaders.

This pamphlet is offered in the continuation of the series for Sunday-school teachers' training as issued by our Publishing House under the auspices of Synod's committee. We have here, in eight chapters, some of the most important results of investigations in the field of child-study. The language is simple enough to meet the requirements of the training course. It is understood, as a matter of fact, that pastors and leaders will themselves add such features and make such adjustments as may be required in the circumstances under which they are working. For advanced teachers this little pamphlet will serve the purposes of review and probably of further stimulation to continue in the field of child-study.

P. E. KRETZMANN

What's Wrong with the Dance? By John R. Rice. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Brochure, 44 pages, 5½×7½. Price, 25 cts.

In *What's Wrong with the Dance?* Evangelist Rice thunders against the modern dance, "child of the brothel," "sister of drunkenness, lewdness, divorce, and murder," "mother of lust," "road to hell." Originally it was a sermon, preached by believing, though doctrinally often errant, Baptist preacher John Rice, in the Fundamental Baptist Tabernacle, Dallas, Tex., Sunday, June 9, 1935, and as such it has all the faults of a long discourse, rambling at times because preached from loosely arranged notes. But the effect of the whole is great, and the author here says things which our own Lutheran dance-tempted youngsters and oldsters ought to hear. When so and so many misled women declare that they had their start on the road to hell on the dance floor, where "decent people" were dancing, drinking, and otherwise unbecomingly disporting themselves, such witness ought to be heeded.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

The Unseen Cross. By C. Ivar Johnson. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 59 pages, 5½×7½. Price, 35 cts.

The Unseen Cross, by an "evangelist and Bible-teacher," is a Fundamentalist exposition and defense of Christ's vicarious suffering and death and, with few slight exceptions (mostly matters of expression), Biblical. In the foreword the author, having frequently delivered this message as a "sermon-lecture," writes: "There is no greater message given by God unto man than the message of salvation through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ." Every word in his book proves that he

means this. The "unseen cross," after which the booklet (in seven chapters) is named, is Christ's substitutionary suffering from His birth to His death on Calvary. We are glad that such books are still being published in this time of woeful doctrinal indifference and superficiality.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Convention of the California and Nevada District, June 24—28, 1940. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1941. 24 pages, 5½×8½. Price, 27 cts.

The *Proceedings* offer only the business transactions and reports of the various officials, committees, and boards. The Convention adopted the overture of the Tri-County Pastoral Conference, "that this convention protest the appointment of Mr. Myron Taylor to the Vatican as personal representative of the President of the United States with the rank of ambassador and to lodge such a protest with the authorities at Washington, D. C." (P. 20.) The convention also resolved "that the essay of Dr. J. H. C. Fritz and the devotional addresses of Dr. W. H. T. Dau be mimeographed in booklet form and that copies be mailed to all pastors, teachers, and delegates." (P. 22.)

TH. LAETSCH

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Questions Jesus Answered. Life's Problems Solved by an Ever-Living Authority. By William Ward Ayer, D. D. 140 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

One Altogether Beautiful. The Matchless Christ. By George Ledrew Rulison. 167 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Gems from Genesis. An Outlined Study. By William G. Heslop, Litt. D., S. D., D. D. 132 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Why All This Suffering? By E. D. Head. 140 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

