

4-1-1942

Book Review. - Literatur

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Recommended Citation

Arndt, W. (1942) "Book Review. - Literatur," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 13 , Article 26.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol13/iss1/26>

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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.

Behold the Man! By Toyohiko Kagawa. Edited by Maxine Shore and M. M. Oblinger. Harper and Brothers, New York and London. 346 pages, 6×8½. Price, \$2.50.

Here we have a life of Christ which is written in the form of a novel. That parts of the Gospel-narrative, even parts in which Jesus is brought before us, are drawn on in works of fiction is not unusual. We may here think of Sieghardus, the centurion under the cross, which is the title of a historical novel written by the late Prof. William Schmidt. The work of Kagawa is different. It is a work of fiction, but the skeleton of the novel is to be the vehicle of the story of Christ. The story, it is true, covers only a little more than a year of Christ's public ministry, but some of the earlier events are brought in by way of reminiscences on the part of some characters. I am happy to say that Kagawa endeavors to follow the sacred narrative and does not deny the authenticity of the miracles of Christ and of His resurrection. Where he permits his imagination to create scenes, events, and personages, he, as a rule, does not do violence to the Gospel-narrative. He does not change, but merely adds. The story of Judas Iscariot he tries to make more intelligible by assuming that Judas had business debts and that his thefts had the purpose of providing him with funds to satisfy his creditors. Here and there crudities have entered in which should have been omitted. In the first part the doctrine of the atoning value of the death of Christ does not come before the reader. In the second part, however, there are repeated references to the payment which Jesus makes for our sins through His suffering. I doubt that Kagawa's method of treating the life of Christ will prove satisfactory. After all, when a part of what is written is fiction, the reader must always be asking himself whether statements referring to Christ are meant to present real history or are merely the product of the author's imagination. It is deserving of commendation that Kagawa, known as a protagonist of social work, does not set out to preach the social gospel in this life of Christ. He keeps away, one is glad to note, from the vagaries and wrong notions of the social gospelites. The publishers say that Kagawa was peculiarly fitted for the writing of this book because he knows the Gospels by heart, has read everything important that has been written about them, has visited Palestine twice, and has been a preacher of the Gospel for thirty-five years. Many of us will feel undoubtedly that to present the life of Christ in the form of a novel makes it impossible to treat the subject with the reverence which we owe it. But all will agree, too, that if this method of setting forth the story of Jesus, the sweetest story ever told, will bring the message of salvation to people who otherwise would not receive it, then the work may be wished Godspeed.

W. ARNDT

God's Purpose in This Age. By J.H. McComb, D.D., Minister of the Broadway Presbyterian Church, N.Y. Fleming H. Revell Company. 93 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

We read on page 29: "Among the lies that can be positively identified as satanic war propaganda against the Lord Jesus and His people are the following: The idea of a vicarious atonement is preposterous." Against this lie we have on pages 33 to 51 a fine testimony to the deity of Christ and to salvation by substitution. "Another bit of war propaganda that can be traced directly to the Father of Lies is the oft repeated statement that the Bible is not true." Against that hear this testimony: "How thankful I am that in this evil world, where men are groping blindly and the blind are leading the blind, it is our privilege to have an infallible rule of faith and practice, even the Word of God. We cannot safely trust our own reason, for we do not know enough; nor our feelings, for they are unstable and biased by sin; nor science, because it cannot tell us what we most want to know; nor the teachings of the Church, for the Church is not infallible. But we can trust the Word of God, for it is God-given; it has been transmitted to us faithfully, and it is being continually proved true. Therefore our duty is to lay aside all prejudices concerning it, to study it, to receive the Christ revealed therein, and to obey Him in all things." "It is a God-given book. God is the real author." (Pp. 68, 73.) Other war propaganda examined and refuted is "the statement that Christianity is a failure because it has not converted the world nor prevented war," "that the majority of Christians are hypocrites," etc. — Like most Fundamentalists, Dr. McComb has embraced and is spreading pre-millennialism: "God does not promise to establish the kingdom of heaven in this age," "World peace and social justice will not come until Christ reigns on earth, and He will reign on earth after His return," "The day is coming when the nations, banded together under the Antichrist, the prince that shall come after Christ has taken the Church out of the world, will attempt to destroy the Jews in their own land. . . ." Millennialism, too, is among the foes of the Church.

TH. ENGELDER

The Religions of Mankind. By Edmund Davison Soper. The Abingdon Press. 364 pages, 6½×8. Price, \$3.00.

In presenting a review of this book, which is a revised edition of the author's monograph first published in 1921 and now enlarged and partly rewritten, we cannot but voice our deep disappointment at the underlying principles of the book. The fact that the author, at least tacitly, presupposes an evolution of religion, vitiates his entire presentation. His *proton pseudos* is this, that the Bible is not the absolute truth, his second, that Christianity is not the absolute religion, and his third, that he does not identify the Elohim of the Old Testament with Yahweh but bids his readers keep in mind "that it was by gradual stages and only after a long development that the idea of God became what we see it in Jeremiah and Isaiah." (P. 271.) We have other queries on the margin of the text on a number of pages. The author states, for example: "The word 'false' is not to be used with reference to other faiths." (P. 22.) He rejects a "primitive divine revelation." (P. 39.) He speaks of the

"unknown prophet" who gave expression to the splendid universalism in the latter part of the book of Isaiah. (P. 282.) He states: "One of the unfortunate [?] results of the Reformation was the emphasis laid on orthodoxy." (P. 332.) Yet the book has points of merit for every scholar who has a sound basis of Scripture truth and is able to sift the chaff from the wheat. His brief treatment of the various heathen religions, beginning with that of animism and passing through Egypt and Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome, the religion of Zoroaster, Hinduism, Buddhism, the religion of the Chinese, the religions of Japan, Judaism, and Mohammedanism, really present the salient points. Of course the reader is obliged to change the entire sequence of thought and instead of following the author in his evolutionistic ideas, which are manifestly wrong from the standpoint of the absolute truth, make his starting point the original adequate divine revelation, which men, in the ignorance and obduracy of their hearts, perverted. Interestingly enough the author himself furnishes plenty of evidence, not only for the existence of an underlying remnant of monotheistic thought in various religions, but also for the persistence of the idea of a triad in connection with the Supreme Being. Until we have, in addition to Dallmann's *Battle of the Bible with the "Bibles,"* our own monographs in the field of comparative religion, we shall be obliged to use books of this type, inadequate as they are.

P. E. KREZTMANN

The Art of Listening to God. By Samuel M. Zwemer. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 217 pages, 5¼×7¼. Price, \$1.50.

The opening chapter lent the title to the book, which presents "sundry meditations and opinions" which "deal successively with diverse themes related to life, reading, evolution and revelation, the choir and the pulpit, missions and church leadership" (Foreword). The chapters vary greatly in value. One of the best is that on *Evolution and Revelation*, which offers valuable apologetic material. Chapter 11 characterizes Mahatma Gandhi's religion as far removed from Christianity. Chapters 13 and 14 are pleas for bringing Jesus to the Moslems, while Chapter 16 urges more energetic missionary endeavors among the Jews. In a lighter vein Chapter 3 calls for the use of simple language in writing and preaching. The author's unionism is quite apparent throughout the book. His enthusiasm, "Schwaermerei," finds expression in such passages as: "Plato and Socrates, Buddha and Confucius and Ghazali and Zoroaster cried with Job, 'Would that I knew where I might find Him.' But there was no answer. How eager they were, each in his own way, to hear; and yet they had no adequate opportunity. . . . The word of the Lord came unto Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and John the Baptist and St. Paul when they were listening for it. In this way and in no other does the Word of God come today." (Pp. 13, 18.) On page 150 we find an interesting comparison of Calvinism and Islam: "Calvinism and Islam have indeed much in common. Both are opposed to compromise and all half-measures. Both were a trumpet-call in hard times for hard men, for 'intellects that could pierce to the roots of things where truth and lies part company.'

"Intolerance is sometimes a virtue. The very essence and life of all great religious movements is the sense of authority; of an external, supernatural framework or pattern to which all must be made conformable.

"Calvinism and Islam were neither of them systems of opinion but both were attempts to make the will of God as revealed (in the Bible or in the Koran) an authoritative guide for social as well as personal affairs, for Church not only, but for State. They both believed in election and reprobation, dependent on God's will." TH. LAETSCH

Where God Meets Man. By O. A. Geiseman, M. A., S. T. D. Published by Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., Chicago. 255 pages, 5¼×8. Price, \$1.50.

The first volume of sermons under this same title has sermons from Easter to Advent. This second volume presents sermons from Advent to Easter. The two volumes thus cover the entire church-year. Three sermons on marriage and the family have been added.

By including books of sermons in the review columns of our theological journal, written and printed for the clergy, we do not mean to relieve our preachers from intensive textual study and from preparing their sermons but to give them an opportunity to learn how other men preach, to wit, how they expound their text, what kind of illustrations they use, how alert they are to conditions under which men live so that they can supply the needs of their hearers, how they express themselves, etc. While every preacher should preserve his own originality and individuality in presenting the Word of God to his congregation, he must beware lest his preaching become stereotyped. Studying the sermons of other preachers will be helpful in this direction. Dr. Geiseman stresses sin and grace, and his sermons make the impression that he is not merely meeting an appointment when he stands in the pulpit but has a divine message as the needs of his congregation demand it. He says, for instance, "The reason why humanity is presently in so chaotic a state is not because of any one individual or any one class of people or any one development in the realm of science, but because there is sin in this world. It is sin which lies at the bottom of all of humanity's difficulties.

"You and I cannot stand by silently and allow the fault for social problems to be placed on others. We must rather say that inasmuch as I am a sinner and you are a sinner and inasmuch as you and I do not do by our fellow-men what we ought, therefore you and I are, in part, the cause for the situation as it obtains in the world today.

"But if sin is at the bottom of all of man's difficulties, then man will not find a solution for his troubles merely through intellect or might of arms. When it comes to finding an answer for sin, we cannot look for it in man. All of us are by nature in bondage of sin. None of us is capable of gaining freedom therefrom by our own effort. Because this is true, therefore it is the glory of Christianity to provide man with the answer which goes to the root of his difficulties and which gives a real solution.

"This answer was once expressed by the man who bridged the gap

between the Old Testament prophet and the New Testament preacher of the Gospel, that is to say, by John the Baptist, when he pointed to Jesus and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.'" (P. 142f.) Or Dr. Geiseman says, "There is nothing more tragic than for a Christian to be so close-lipped and silent about his hope and faith in Jesus that people can do business with him for years without discovering that he is a Christian." (P. 162.) Or we read in another sermon, "Christians so commonly accept the world's standard of evaluation. Instead of determining for the world what is truly valuable, they allow the world to tell them what they should regard valuable. That explains why Christians frequently are so much like the worldlings in their ambitions, in their hopes, in their desires; why Christians frequently emphasize the selfsame things which the worldlings emphasize. That also explains why professed Christians sometimes are ready to resort to the ways of the world in order to accomplish their desired goals and fulfil their ambitions. . . . When Christians behave that way, they are not the light of the world. They are asking the world to be a light unto them. But that isn't what Jesus said. Jesus turns to you this morning, and He says to you inasmuch as you believe in Him, 'Ye are the light of the world.'" (P. 113.)

J. H. C. FRITZ

God Is My Fuehrer. The Last 28 Sermons. By Pastor Martin Niemoeller. Philosophical Library and Alliance Book Corporation, New York. 294 pages, 5¾×8¼. Price, \$2.75.

For anyone wishing to inform himself on Pastor Niemoeller's witness and work, these (rather brief) addresses will no doubt prove valuable and helpful. The sermons appear sketchy, as if they had been delivered *ex tempore* or as if they had been taken down in shorthand by some listener. They may be divided into two groups, one in which the political issue is hardly touched upon and another in which resistance to the government in power seems to be the chief objective. In the former there is at times much Gospel-preaching and a definite emphasis on the *sola fide*, so especially in the Reformation Festival sermon (Oct. 31, 1936). In the discourse on "The Unity of the Church" (Whitmonday, May 17, 1937) Niemoeller confounds the *Una Sancta* with the visible Church and ignores the dividing lines between Lutheranism and Calvinism. He belongs to the confessional group of German divines, desiring positive proclamation of the central truths of Christianity and resisting the encroachments of the government on the domain of the Church. But the special *status controversiae* between the two is nowhere clearly stated, manifestly because Niemoeller (carefully watched by the secret police) had to express himself cautiously. It will take some time after the war before the issue can be clarified. The preface by Thomas Mann rather obscures the matter since it is lacking in that objectivity which enables the reader to form a clear picture of the politico-religious situation in which Niemoeller played so prominent a part. The book, on the whole, presents important material for the study of a timely subject and will be welcomed by all who wish to know a little more about Pastor Niemoeller than what is commonly said about him in the press.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Every Man's Book. By Francis Carr Stifler. Harper & Brothers, New York. 113 pages. Price, \$1.00.

The author of this volume is Editorial Secretary of the American Bible Society. In eighteen chapters, each one brief but packed with new and stimulating data, he tells of early translations of the Bible, of the singular influence of the King James Version, of the phenomenal growth of translations of the Bible in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and of the great blessings which the Bible brings to all lands where it is circulated, read, and believed. Readers will be especially grateful to Mr. Stifler for those chapters in which he discusses the prominent part played by the Bible in English and American history. Much of the material offered by the author is so recent, and his style is so refreshing and compelling, that the reader is kept spell-bound to the last paragraph.

Though Mr. Stifler makes some statements to which we hesitate to subscribe and though we wish he had somewhere in the book developed more fully the way of salvation which the Bible teaches, he has rendered a noble service. Pastors will find in this volume abundant and excellent materials for talks before organizations of their parish. The price of the book is remarkably low.

PAUL BRETSCHER

My Neighbor of Another Color. A Treatise on Race Relations in the Church. By Andrew Schulze. 147 pages, 8×5½. Price, \$1.00. Order from the Walther League Office, 6438 Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Ill.

This discussion of a pressing problem has scientific value. It offers anthropological and sociological information that bears on the relation between the Caucasian and the Negro races in America. It quotes statements such as these: "There is no reliable proof of innate differences." "The idea that any race has, as such, definable characteristics making it 'superior' or 'inferior' in substance and potentiality is a delusion without biological, physiological, or other scientific foundation." The treatise also has great religious value. It propounds and drives home the great truth that before Christ, in the spiritual realm, there are no differences of race, that a Negro Christian is there the equal of a Caucasian Christian, that the Negro Christian possesses all the spiritual rights and privileges which Christ bestowed upon all His brethren. And that means that the Christian of any race will treat the members of any other race, particularly the brother-Christians of that race, with love and kindness and with Christian respect. It means, too, that a white congregation will, as occasion demands it, have a colored pastor in the pulpit of its church as a guest-preacher and, if the need arises, have a colored Christian receive the Holy Communion at its altar. It does not mean that the Church must establish mixed congregations. The Lord of the Church has left the ordering of this matter to the wisdom of His Christians. He has given no regulation either forbidding or demanding it. And racial peculiarities being what they are, each race having and cherishing its own temperament, habits, and idiosyncrasies, Christian wisdom has established the present order. And in Christian love each congregation

gladly recognizes the New Testament law that each congregation has equal standing with the other before Christ.—Pastor Schulze has spent all the years of his ministry, eighteen, in serving our colored churches, first in Springfield, Ill., and then in St. Louis. He works in sympathetic understanding and Christian love and respect of the Negro. This book also gives evidence of that. Its purpose is to impress upon us our sacred obligations to our colored brethren. We bespeak for this scholarly treatise the kind and respectful consideration of the brethren, even though we do not agree with all of its conclusions and judgments.

TH. ENGELDER

Training Fishers of Men. By the Rev. Philip Lange. Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. 20 pages, 4½×6½. Price, 10 cents.

This is a tract which all our pastors should read and then act in accordance with its instructions. Why? Because it speaks of the duty of our lay people to bear witness of Christ to the unchurched. The writer of the tract says, "What tremendous results could be accomplished if all members of all of our congregations would realize that they have a missionary call just as well as the pastor! . . . If the pastor can get the members of his congregation to a point where they are passionately interested in the salvation of souls, a mission revival is sure to follow." (Pp. 5, 6.) The pastor must prepare his people for such personal service. Pastor Lange says, "The annual mission festivals with their sermonic generalizations on the part of visiting preachers will not suffice. The home pastor must do the work." (P. 5.) Mission-festival preachers might well take note of this criticism: "sermonic generalizations." It need not be so. Such a text, for instance, as John 4:28-30, 39-42 speaks of *personal* soul-winning and its blessed results. Verily, the 70,000,000 unchurched people in our country, many or most of which are in territories where we have established congregations, offer much opportunity for personal mission work. While this work has been increasingly done by our churches in late years, there is very, very much that has been left undone. May Pastor Lange's tract be an added incentive towards a greater effort at evangelization. Some pastors and churches are doing it very successfully. Why not others?

J. H. C. FRITZ

Great Missionaries to Africa. By J. T. Mueller. 7¾×5¼. 179 pages. Price, \$1.00.

John G. Paton. By J. T. Mueller. 7¾×5¼. 129 pages. Price, \$1.00.
Both published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In the first of these two volumes Dr. Mueller, in a very readable and inspirational style, tells briefly the life-story of such great missionaries as Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, Johann Ludwig Krapf, Alexander Mackay, Mary Slessor, and others, thirteen short biographies in all. There is an introductory chapter on the need of Christ in Africa and a second chapter on early Christian Africa, up to the Mohammedan conquest. We believe it would have made this series of biographies

more complete if the author would have found room to include the work of the Norwegian Lutheran missionary pioneer, Hans Schreuder, in Zululand, and the work of the American Lutherans, Morris Officer and David Day, in Liberia.—In the second volume the author retells in an interesting manner the story of John Paton, the apostle to the New Hebrides. Both our pastors and people will find these books very much worth while. They can well be included in reading courses for missionary study groups. Unfortunately, the price of the books is high, considering the poor typography and thick paper, and in their outward form they cannot compare with similar books put out by our own publishing house at a considerably lower price.

W. G. POLACK

A Manual for Altar Guilds. By Carl F. Weidmann, A. M. Foreword by A. Wismar, Ph. D. 64 pages. Stiff paper covers. Price, 50 cts. Published by Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., New York and Chicago.

In Part I the author discusses Altar Cloths, Altar Linens, Communion Linens, Ornaments of the Altar, Sacred Vessels. In Part II he gives guides for the work of the altar guild. In Part III he outlines the use of liturgical colors during the church-year. In addition to the definitions of terms given otherwise in the text, the last section of the booklet contains a very usable glossary of terms. The author is sound in his liturgical views, and his very practical book is recommended heartily to our pastors, altar guilds, and all who are interested in liturgics.

W. G. POLACK

Fire Upon the Earth. By Bernhard Christensen. Published by Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company, Minneapolis. 256 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.50.

This book speaks of the eternal blessings which the Christian religion bestows upon the Church at large, the local congregation, the home, and the individual, and through which agencies it should exert its good influence in the world for the salvation of men. Its thought-provoking presentation lifts it out of the class of being "just another book." The author, Dr. Christensen, has taught at Augsburg College and Seminary in Minneapolis since 1930 and since 1938 is president of that institution.

J. H. C. FRITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

God Bless America and Other Sermons. By William Herschel Ford, D. D. 144 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

The Only True Comfort. Eight Radio Sermons on the Fourteenth Chapter of John. By Rev. Benjamin H. Spalink. 70 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, 35 cts.

Not Now, But Afterwards and Other Sermons. By James McGinlay, D. D. 147 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

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

Youth Seeks a Master. By Louis H. Evans, D. D. 126 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

From the Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati:

More Devotional Talks for Women's Organizations. By Frankie Oliver Ivy. 108 pages, 5¼×7½.