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## Book Review. - Literatur

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**Book Review — Literatur**


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All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

**A Study of the Passion of Christ.** By A. Fibiger. The History of the Sufferings and Death of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, translated by Olaf Lysnes. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 293 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$2.00.

We are glad to draw attention to this book on the suffering of our Savior. The author is a citizen of Denmark, where he was a leader of the Home Missionary Movement. The translation into English, as far as we are able to judge, has been well done. "The book is divided into short chapters—about as many as there are days in Lent—in order that one may, if he wishes, read one meditation each day, and thus follow our Lord on His way of suffering" (Foreword). We think that no minister who buys this book will be disappointed. The various events which are brought before us in the history of the Savior's passion are discussed one after the other so that one here has a commentary of these vital chapters in the history of our Lord's life. The author makes no attempt at grandiose oratory. What strikes us as particularly favorable is the wealth of quotations and illustrations which one meets here. The literature of the world is at times drawn on to lend emphasis to a statement. The author endeavors to be practical and frequently dwells on problems that one meets in everyday life. Our readers will welcome a paragraph.

Speaking of the responsibility of Judas, Fibiger says (p. 143), "Henrick Ibsen, the Norwegian sphinx, who loved to struggle with lies in life and the puzzles in life, has, of course, to tackle this, too. In his book *Emperor and Galilean* there is a conversation between the mystic Maximos and Julian the Apostate. First, Cain is conjured up and then Judas, 'a red-whiskered man with torn clothes and a rope around his neck.' Julian extends his hand to keep him away and says in a low tone: 'No nearer! No nearer!' Then he asks: 'What were you in life?' The voice answers: 'The twelfth wheel of the world's wagon.' 'The twelfth? Even the fifth is counted as useless.' The voice: 'Where would the wagon have rolled to without me?' Julian: 'Where did it roll to with you?' 'Into glorification.' 'Why did you leap?' 'Because I willed to.' 'What did you will?' 'What I had to will.' 'Who chose you?' 'The Master.' 'Did the Master have foreknowledge when He chose you?' The voice: 'Well, that is the puzzle.' Further than that we apparently cannot get. The mystery that remains here no one of us can solve. It must be explained in the light of wisdom and righteousness of the almighty Savior. And we gain nothing by speculating about it. And still less by complaining."

We ought to quote here, too, what the author says on the nature of Christ's being forsaken by God. Having spoken of the Savior's physical suffering, he says (p. 233): "And yet—all this was as nothing



compared to the anguish of soul that He suffered when in these three hours He went into the great darkness and was separated from God. Then was Jesus in hell for us. For what is it to be in hell? It is to be where God is not. That is hell, and that is the worst pain and torment of hell: being eternally forsaken by God."

We wish we could close our review here. Unfortunately, from the doctrinal point of view the book has one serious defect which we have noticed. When the institution of the Lord's Supper is discussed (p.31), Ricard is quoted as saying, "A shadow of the cross falls on the supper table with its lighted candles. Suddenly everything He sees before Him becomes pictures of what is to come. The dull red wine in the cup makes Him think of His own red blood. The white unleavened bread He breaks, is it not as though it might be His own holy body delivered up to death?" Then Fibiger adds, "There is neither time nor place here to consider more in detail what the Holy Supper gives and accomplishes." The four points which he enumerates do not contain mention of the Real Presence. It seems that the author wishes to reject this doctrine. Why has he not a word of criticism for the bald, rationalistic remarks of Ricard? Why does he not briefly tell us about the glorious mystery of this heavenly meal?

With respect to matters of history and archaeology, we doubt that the author (or the translator) is always accurate enough. Cf. the statement (p.14) concerning Maundy Thursday: "On this day the Jews took their first bath after putting on sackcloth and ashes on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent." Another baffling sentence (p.14) pertains to the time that the Passover was instituted, "The month was then called Abib (an ear of corn), as autumn [?] was near, but after the time of the Babylonian captivity it was also called Nisan, and from this month Israel counted the beginning of their sacred year." Here somebody has blundered.

W. ARNDT

**A New Heaven and a New Earth.** By Edwin Lewis, Professor in Drew Theological Seminary. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 248 pages, 5½×7. Price, \$2.00.

What this somewhat fanciful title means is explained on page 31: "The heaven makes the earth. According to what men esteem the 'high,' so will they deal with the 'low.' No people can be other than its gods." Applied to Christianity, it means: "What can the Christian, for whom God is Love and the world his good creation and life his gift and Jesus Christ his revealing and redeeming Word to men — what can the Christian do if not say, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . . I am debtor?'" (P.32.) It is most certainly true that the knowledge of God's love, of the forgiveness of sins effected by the vicarious death of Jesus Christ, transforms the believer's life, that "there is suffering love on the earth because there is suffering love in heaven" (p.56), that, applying the terminology of the title, "by the spirit of humility, by the spirit of self-forgetting service, 'the new earth' must come to pass" (p.156). But this blessed result will be obtained only where the Biblical, the true teaching of the Atonement is presented. And our book does not do that. It



speaks of "Jesus Christ, God's revealing and redeeming Word to men," it speaks of Jesus Christ as "the vicarious Sufferer" (p.142), but it does that in this wise: "By the power of an insight whose source we can only surmise, Jesus took the Second Isaiah's description of the Suffering Servant of God and then said: 'He is I; I am He.' Even if the somewhat common claim be true that in the thought of the original writer the Suffering Servant was not Messiah, that cannot destroy Jesus' right to have made it so. Actually it only accentuates the sheer spiritual audacity of His insight. If Jesus made out of the Suffering Servant what nobody else had ever made out of Him—Messiah; and if in the overpowering description of One who suffered for sins not His own He saw the principle of the world's redemption, and that in whose light every man must be finally judged; and if, having already identified Himself with the Son of Man in His aspect of Judge, He now identifies Himself with the Messiah in this His aspect of humiliation; and if, in this twofold identification, the profoundest spiritual insights of the most profoundly spiritual minds of the past are brought to sharp focus—if this be the case, then we can only say that in Jesus we are confronted with a disclosure of the absolute law of human salvation." (P.142.) Such a description of "vicarious suffering" will certainly give no man the knowledge of the blessed truth that God imputed the world's sins to Jesus, who wiped them out with His blood. And no man will conceive of the grace of God as absolutely free when he reads: "The kingdom of God is not a human achievement but a divine gift, although it is a gift only upon conditions which men must themselves fulfil. . . . What only God can make possible will be made possible, to be at once appropriated by men who will meet its conditions." (Pp.101,168.)

One need not be surprised at Dr. Lewis' failure to grasp the Biblical teaching on the Atonement, seeing that he does not recognize Jesus as the absolutely perfect Teacher nor Scripture as the inspired Word of God. See the quotation from page 142 and add this: "That Jesus Himself accepted the [apocalyptic] view along with His acceptance of much else of the thought of His time is evident all through the Gospels. . . . We have seen the astonishing way in which Jesus achieved His own emancipation from tradition. We need not hesitate to say that Jesus came slowly to this truth. Jesus at last arrived at His conviction respecting the cross." On Scripture: "If only we could disentangle the essential mind of Christ from the wrappings in which it came to us! . . . What Jesus 'demonstrably' said or believed must always remain a question. Matthew describes the crucifixion as attended by the portents required by the tradition. How could He be the Son of Man and all the proper 'signs' be absent? Compare the supposition with the fourth Gospel, and one begins to appreciate the extent of the emancipation which John had experienced. . . . The words, 'the Son of God' are not found in some of the best ancient manuscripts of the Gospel (Mark 1:1). In any event, the words would represent the *judgment of the Church* at a period later than the lifetime of Jesus."

Dr. Lewis has the right to use "the term 'heaven' in a more or less metaphorical sense" (p.11). But we have the right to ask him what



heaven in the literal sense means. All he has to say on this point is contained in these two statements: "We are not concerned—at least not at present—with what may be awaiting us at the end of the journey. This is traditionally what heaven is supposed to be if the journey has been as it should. . . . Whatever heaven there may be at the end of the journey will depend upon the sort of heaven from which the journey sets out." (P.11.) "Then 'why stand ye looking into heaven?' As this Jesus you look for went, so shall He return. But how did He go? In the nature of the case, 'in a spiritual manner.' Literally, heaven is not up there. Heaven is wherever the spirit of Christ is in complete possession." (P.177.) It certainly will not do to dismiss "heaven," our final home, with these few remarks. The less so as Dr. Lewis definitely denies the second coming of Christ as presented in Scripture. "There is to be no second coming in the sense usually understood; no turning of the sun into darkness; no opening of the graves that the dead might come forth; no Great Assize for the separation and judgment of men. . . ." "What is known as the second coming of Christ seemed to have warrant in Jesus' own words. Even Paul gave it up only slowly, if, indeed, he did not continue to cherish it to the end." "John is recovering the fact that the coming of the Son of Man, the glorification of the Son of Man, the judgment of the world, the casting out of Satan has happened already." (Pp.163,152,161.) Our book takes no notice of the fact that this same John also records and believes the words of Jesus: "The hour is coming, etc." (John 5:28 f.)

Our book takes issue with humanism, ultra-radical liberalism. "The whole tendency of modern humanism has been in the direction of dethroning God and enthroning man. . . . God the Father has been cast out of heaven. . . . Jesus Christ has been cast out of heaven. . . . The denial of the Incarnation is the casting of Jesus Christ out of heaven!" (P. 212 ff.) Dr. Lewis is right in asking these humanists: "Is the impoverishing of heaven the way to enrich the earth?" And that applies to all and any impoverishing of the heavenly doctrine. TH. ENGELDER

**The Nature of the Early Church.** By Ernest F. Scott, D.D. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941. 245 pages, 5½×8.

We opened this book with a sense of keen expectation, being familiar, in a measure, with the possibilities of the topic presented in the title; but we closed the book with an even greater sense of disappointment. It is a pity that men presume to write on any topic connected with the history of the primitive Church without wholeheartedly subscribing to the doctrine of inspiration. This is the first defect of the book, namely, that the author weakens his statements time and again by his uncertainty concerning the inspired account. He says of Luke's account in the Book of Acts: "He has also woven into his narrative a number of reminiscences which had come down from various channels and sometimes had been colored and worn out of shape in the process." (P.7.) Of the passage Matt. 16:16-19 he blandly states: "As it stands, it is more than suspicious. Mark, on whom Matthew is dependent throughout the chapter [?], knows nothing of this addition." (P.25.) On page 39 the author states



that Jesus was mistaken in His eschatological concepts. On page after page we were compelled to place queries on the margin because the arguments of the author are vitiated by his subjective attitude toward the inspired account. His is an attempt at a philosophy of church history which lacks the solid foundation of Scripture truth. Thus the kingdom concept of the author is muddled and inadequate because he does not distinguish between the essence of the Kingdom, as explained both by Jesus and Saint Paul in their well-known definitions, and the outward manifestation of the kingdom in the work of corporate church bodies. He speaks of the phenomenon of *glossolalia* (p.78), but it is certain that much more satisfactory answers have been found to explain both the Pentecost miracle and the strange speaking with tongues perhaps peculiar to certain sections of the Church, e. g., the Corinthian congregation. The author's attempt at explaining the introduction of Sunday fails badly since he does not use the pertinent Scripture texts and apparently thinks only of the Jewish background in the early Church, whereas we know that the Gospel was established at an early date in heathen centers, with little or no synagog antecedents. Throughout the book we received the impression that the author has nothing positive and constructive to offer anyone who regards the Scripture as the verbally inspired Word of God.

P. E. KRETZMANN

**The Preacher's Manual. A Study in Homiletics with the Addition of a Brief History of Preaching, Sermon Material, Texts for Various Occasions, and Pericopic Systems.** By John H. C. Fritz, D. D. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. IX and 390 pages, 9x6. Price, \$3.00 net.

The author of the *Preacher's Manual* is exceptionally well qualified to speak or write on problems of the practical ministry. As pastor, synodical official, dean of students at Concordia Seminary, and professor of Homiletics, Dr. Fritz has gained wide experience in the field of pastoral theology. A little over twenty years ago he published the *Practical Missionary*, in a sense an epoch-making booklet. It gave the present reviewer a new concept of the obligations and the opportunities of the ministry, and we dare say that it helped in a large measure to shape the present mission policy of our Synod. A few years ago Dr. Fritz rendered a real service to our ministry by publishing his *Pastoral Theology*. His ability to present clearly and concisely the Scriptural principles in questions of casuistry has undoubtedly helped many a pastor to solve the peculiar problems which arise in congregational life. Dr. Fritz's latest publication, the *Preacher's Manual*, will also, in our opinion, make a real contribution to our synodical life.

The *Preacher's Manual* has three main divisions, 1) the manual on preaching, 156 pages; 2) sermon studies, sermons, outlines, pp. 157—369; 3) texts for various occasions and the texts for 7 complete pericopic systems. It is only natural that in the manual of preaching the author had the beginner particularly in mind. But the book is intended also for the experienced pastor. (Preface, p. VIII.) When first reading the manual, we asked ourselves: What can a preacher of twenty and thirty years' experience learn from a manual as concise and brief as the



present one? True, the manual is intended primarily for theological students, and yet the experienced pastor will profit by this manual, not only by "brushing up on the essential things which make for good preaching" but also—and we dare say primarily—by checking his sermon method against the rules laid down in the manual. Yes, we know the basic rules of homiletics. But are we always conscious of them? After preaching one thousand to two thousand sermons, are we not in danger of "getting into a rut"? Use the summary on p.85, or make your own summary of the basic principles, and then check your sermons according to these rules.

There are several basic principles which the author wishes to impress deeply on his reader. It almost seems that the theme of his book is: The sermon must be textual. We heartily subscribe to this basic principle. We are offended at sermons which treat the text in such a way that the congregation is led to believe that only a well-trained theologian can understand the Scriptures, or sermons which use the text merely as a pretext. We furthermore agree with the author when he writes that the topical method may offer the preacher a wider range but that it invites the preaching of platitudes; the topical sermon may have breadth, but lacks depth. (P. 31.) Lutheran preachers have in the main employed the textual method, and we hope that Dr. Fritz's repeated emphasis of this type of preaching will help to retain this method in our Synod. Of course, as the author points out, the use of this method may cause some difficulty if the preacher uses only the standard pericopes. After all, there is a limit to the number of thoughts which are actually contained in each of the Gospel and Epistle Lessons. If the sermon is to be really textual, then the preacher will turn to other pericopic systems. It is for this reason that the author has included in his book the best-known pericopic systems, supplying the preacher with new texts for fourteen years! (P. 337f.) Textual preaching presupposes thorough textual study. And Dr. Fritz certainly emphasizes the necessity of such study. Another important point which is stressed by the author is the careful preparation of the manuscript. Somewhere we read that former President Coolidge never spoke in public without carefully preparing his manuscript, submitting it to experts for a critical evaluation, and making the necessary corrections. As president he felt the responsibility of being the country's official spokesman too keenly to run the risk of saying something which was not entirely true to facts or which might be subject to misinterpretation. Should not a messenger of the Lord of lords carefully prepare his manuscript? We wonder whether the advice given on p. 75 concerning the careful preparation and the necessary revision of the manuscript is too hard to follow? True, every pastor will in the course of time follow a procedure which is best suited to his natural endowments. But we are inclined to agree with the author that the average preacher should follow these suggestions in the main. Even those preachers who preach from carefully prepared outlines will do well to write sermons at frequent intervals, even though they do not "memorize" the manuscript. Incidentally Dr. Fritz's advice on memorizing is sane and practical. The writing and editing of the



sermon will improve the preacher's style and diction and lead to greater precision in expressing the great truths which are to be presented to the congregation. At the same time it will also help the pastor to avoid another pitfall against which Dr. Walther warns in his *Law and Gospel*: "There is a tendency among young people to value the beautiful language and style of an author more than the contents of his writings. You must always have a greater regard for the matter (*quid*) than the manner (*quomodo*) of a treatise."

We take it that the sermon studies, particularly the completed sermons, furnished by the author, Dr. Th. Laetsch, and Prof. W. A. Baepler, are not included in the text to relieve the pastor of independent work in preparing his sermons but rather as models and patterns. This opinion would agree with the advice which the author has given in the manual. We hope that these patterns in sermon studies will encourage young preachers to follow the author's earnest advice to make exhaustive textual study the basis for sermon-making. — The chapter on the History of Preaching is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of this important topic but rather only an introduction to this field. Incidentally, the dates for MacLaren, 1858—1903 (p. 151), are not the dates of this famous preacher's life but of his ministry in Manchester.

Since preaching is the pastor's most important work, conference programs usually include a discussion of some phase of homiletics. May we suggest that chapters of the manual be taken up for discussion? In this way the influence of Dr. Fritz's book will be increased, and under God's gracious guidance the pulpit will fulfill its glorious mission in an ever-increasing measure to the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls.

F. E. MAYER

**Seeking Kenya's Treasures. . . The Labors of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Johnston, Africa Inland Mission Pioneers.** By Gertrude Hill Nystrom. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 147 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.00.

This is one of the most absorbing biographical sketches of missions in Africa which the reviewer has read for years, largely so because the author, a niece of Missionary and Mrs. C. F. Johnston, had access to their voluminous correspondence from which she gleaned the details of her fascinating story. The main interest centers, of course, in the two stations founded by Missionary Johnston, Kangundo and Machakos, both in Ukamba, from which, however, the Gospel spread over large areas. But the story contains many other interesting things. There is, for example, much vivid description of the fauna and flora of the alluring Kenya Colony. Here Theodore Roosevelt hunted wild animals and visited the missionaries personally, receiving from them a new and deeper appreciation of the value of Christian missions. From here also the British and American mission societies took over the Lutheran missions in the present Tanganyika territory after the First World War. This perhaps accounts for the great increase which the Africa Inland Mission showed in the 35 years of Missionary Johnston's service. The chapter on "Twentieth Century Demon Possession" deserves reading by every pastor. The phenomena here described are certainly unique and



agree remarkably with those recorded in the Gospels. Very interesting, too, is the account of the reaction of the natives to communistic influences. After having received innumerable blessings through the preaching of the Gospel for thirty years, the African, in large numbers, including some elders and leaders of the churches, turned against the missionaries because they "had done nothing for them," that is, because they had not given them earthly advantages (a lazy life with nothing to do but with a big salary). What the missionaries did to counteract this insidious, pernicious movement, may teach others, working in Africa or among Negroes in general, valuable lessons. The Africa Inland Mission is a *faith* mission, depending for its needs entirely on faith and prayer. How well this prayer plan worked in the cases of Mr. and Mrs. Johnston puts to shame all who are listless and indifferent to prayer. Since the biography is written from the Moody-school background, a number of things in the book differ from Lutheran teaching and practice. These, however, may easily be explained by the pastor to such groups as desire to read the book. And it certainly should be read, since for stimulating missionary interest it occupies first rank among mission books of its kind.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**The Deacon and Worship.** By Amos John Traver. Published by The United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa. 64 pages, 5x7. Price, 20 cents.

In this brochure of 64 pages only one phase of the duties of the deacons and church councilmen is taken up, their duty with respect to public worship. The author speaks of the nature of worship, the Common Service, some liturgical customs, Christian symbols, music in the public service, of receiving the sermon, of Holy Communion, and other responsibilities of the church councilmen. While, of course, the booklet is written for the United Lutheran Church in America, yet it contains much valuable information on the points mentioned, and many church officers will be benefited by a perusal of it. The Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence is not correctly brought out on page 50, where we read, "Lutherans believe that the spiritual body and blood of Christ are present in the Communion, for He said, 'This is My body' and 'This is the blood of the New Testament.' They also believe that there is no actual change in the bread and wine. Some of the Lutheran theologians have tried to find words to explain this mystery by saying that Christ's body and blood were present 'in, with, and under the bread and wine.' After all is said, it still remains a great mystery, only to be accepted by faith. To Lutherans it is always something more than a feast of memory. It is a sacrament in every sense of the word. The very life of Christ enters the soul of the sincere communicant, to drive out sin and renew and empower him for Christian living." Whether six Communion services each year are sufficient "so that the souls of Christian people are properly nourished" (p. 47), we doubt very much. And we hope that the custom of securing "signed cards from all who commune" will in our circles never replace the age-old custom of personal registration for Holy Communion.

TH. LAETSCH