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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.

Walks with Our Lord through John's Gospel. By Erling C. Olsen. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 2 Volumes. 5½×8. Vol. I, 328 pages; Vol. II, 323 pages. Price, \$3.00.

Paul's Swan Song. A Study of Second Timothy. By Oscar R. Mangum. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 136 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

It is a significant thing that books of this type are still appearing on the market. Apparently there is still some interest in expositions of the Bible, and from the Fundamentalist angle at that. The two volumes on the Gospel of John, comprising 651 pages, present the rather ambitious effort to cover all the chief points of this most "spiritual Gospel," as Luther calls it, in a total of 100 talks or sketches, for each of which the author offers a striking caption, such as "A Trek through Samaria," "Snooping Religionists," "The Tragedy of a Mistaken Parentage," "The First Blackout in Palestine," etc. Fortunately many of the topics are not quite so sensational. The style of the author is informal, even sprightly at times, and one might learn something from this lively way of putting things. However, in his effort to be striking the author sometimes becomes inaccurate. In fact, the reader who is trained in the clear distinctions of systematic theology must constantly be on the alert, since the discussion frequently fails to distinguish clearly. Some of the statements made are actually peculiar, as when we are told that chapter 1, verse 5, refers to the preincarnation ministry of Jesus (p.21), when he offers misleading remarks about "children of God" and "eternal judgment" (p. 110), or when he asserts that "the Gospel begins at the cross" (p. 111). Both volumes abound in such peculiar assertions, and one grows restive in his search for clearness and Scripturalness. And the chief defect of the author's presentation is his insistence on the Reformed view of the Sacraments. In his eagerness to disprove the clear words of Christ concerning the efficacy of Holy Baptism (cp. Eph. 5:25,26) he even goes so far as to identify the water with the Word of God, insisting that water symbolizes the Word of God and evidently not realizing that the plain text in John 3:6 makes his interpretation ridiculous. (P.87 f.) With regard to the Lord's Supper also, which he discusses in connection with John 6, under the heading "The Communion Table," the author blandly states: "It is impossible, literally, for us to eat His flesh and to drink His blood, but we can do that which is symbolized by bread and wine." The fact that the author teaches the deity of Christ and the atonement through His blood compensates, in a measure, for the many confusing and inadequate statements, but he spoils a fine exposition of chapter 3:22 f. by a declaration of his unionism: "If there is one thing in the experience of this man for which I praise God, it is the fact that, though I have consistently

avoided taking any denominational stand, I have been privileged to minister the Word of God in various denominational churches, irrespective of ceremonial barriers." (P. 117.) A very discriminating student may get some good points out of this exposition of the Gospel of John, but he is bound to exercise the greatest of care.—Mangum's exposition of Second Timothy is, as he himself states, "in reality a footnote to the commentary of Dr. John Priest Greene, which is now out of print." The exposition offers a minimum of scientific material, especially in the field of philology, emphasizing, rather, the practical and devotional use of the text. There are no profound exegetical discussions nor searching doctrinal elaborations. There are many stimulating and thought-provoking statements and paragraphs in the book, as when the author declares: "Our mass evangelism yesterday was largely responsible for the mighty host of marginal members of our churches today." (P. 13.) "Adventuring with God cannot fail to thrill the sincere heart. The days of adventure are not over, nor are all the pioneers dead. There are frontiers of the soul not yet visited." (P. 16.) "Commit to others what you have been taught. This is the only apostolic succession we find in Scripture—the succession of the truth." (P. 45.) "If we name the name of Jesus, it means that we are claiming relationship with Him. Then by our living let us prove to the world that we are His." (P. 81.) Too bad that the author's Reformed theology, especially on the Sacraments, is brought out in his exposition, as when he states: "The Lord's Supper is in reality a feast of memory." (P. 55.) "Martin Luther split Protestant Christianity wide open in his contention about the bread of the Lord's Supper: 'This is My body.' His literalism drove Zwingli and all his followers away. They [the latter] contended that the bread was a symbol of His body, and this contention has won the field." (P. 73.) "We believe that there are only two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but these are not sacraments at all. They are for Christians and have no saving power." (P. 97.) It is too bad also that the author's concept of Inspiration is altogether inadequate to do justice to the clear statement of 2 Tim. 3:14-17. He denies Verbal Inspiration, although he asserts that he accepts Plenary Inspiration, an expression which certainly is a misnomer as used by him. In the case of this book also it is only the careful student who will be able to separate the wheat from the chaff.

P. E. KREZMANN

The Atonement. By Loraine Boettner, D.D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 136 pages, 5½×7. Price, \$1.00.

"It hardly seems possible," says Dr. Boettner, "that with this central truth written so plainly and so repeatedly across the pages of Scripture, any honest or serious-minded persons could arise, as do the Unitarians and Modernists, and declare that the essence of Christianity consists in our following the example of Christ in lives of social service or that the chief purpose of the Church is to build a new social order in this world." Again: "That the doctrine of the atonement has been neglected and obscured in our day is very evident. Only rarely do we hear a sermon or see an article printed on it. Yet it is the very heart of the Christian message, and without it the Gospel is powerless" (pp. 32, 134).

For these reasons this book was written. And those who preach sermons and write articles on this subject will find helpful material here. The doctrine itself, vicarious atonement, and the related and subsidiary articles, for instance, original sin (the imputation of Adam's guilt and total depravity), the deity of Christ, together with the refutation of "the erroneous theories of the atonement" (the moral influence theory, the governmental theory, and the mystical theories) are here forcefully presented. All the force of Scripture is put back of it.—Portions of the book, however, will have to be laid aside as useless and harmful, those which deny the Scriptural teaching on the extent of the atonement. We have here the old Calvinistic denial of universal grace. "Nowhere does Scripture either directly assert or imply that Christ died in the stead of all men or with the purpose of saving all men." (P. 90.) That in the face of John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 2:2! This, too: "In a number of the supposedly universalistic passages in which 'all' or 'all men' are mentioned the reference is not to all men individually, but to 'all kinds of men,' Jews and Gentiles, 'without reference to nationality, color, or social position, and to women and children as well'" (p. 89).—By the way, we heartily agree with Dr. Boettner when he tells the Arminians that they have no right to fault the Calvinist for his refusal to teach universal grace, since they do the very same thing: "In reality the Arminians do limit the atonement as certainly as do Calvinists. The Arminians limit its *power* or inherent value; for they say that in itself it does not save anybody, that in each individual in order to become effective it must be supplemented by faith and evangelical obedience on the part of the person and that each person is sovereign in determining whether or not he will have faith in Christ. Calvinists limit the atonement quantitatively, but not qualitatively; Arminians limit it qualitatively, but not quantitatively. The fact of the matter is that Arminians actually place more severe limitations on the atonement than do Calvinists. According to the Arminian theory the atonement has simply made it possible for all men to co-operate with divine grace by doing meritorious works and thus secure their own salvation" (p. 93 f.). That is what the Lutheran theologians have been telling the synergists. Synergism denies, in effect, that God is willing to save all men; He is willing to save only those who are able to co-operate with saving grace.—We read on page 97: "There are in the final analysis just two views of the atonement which are held by Christians: the Calvinistic and the Arminian." No, there is a third teaching. The Lutherans teach, with the Calvinists, the *sola gratia* but refuse to deny, with the Calvinists, the *gratia universalis*. They teach, with the Arminians and synergists, that Christ redeemed all men but refuse to deny, with the Arminians and synergists, the *sola gratia*. We want people to know that there is a theology which is immune against the rationalistic argument of Calvinism that, since salvation is throughout the work of God, the fact that not all are saved proves that God is not willing to save all men; and immune against the rationalistic argument of the Arminian-synergistic school that, since God is willing to save all men, the reason why not all are saved must be that some are not quite as corrupt as others and are able to effect a better behavior than others.

TH. ENGELDER

"Jehovah's Witnesses." By Prof. F. E. Mayer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 52 pages. Price, 25 cents.

The reviewer was present when the contents of this brochure were read before the Western District Pastoral Conference as an essay, which so impressed the hearers that they asked Concordia Publishing House to publish it in pamphlet form. Since "Judge" Rutherford, the past leader of the sect, is now dead, it is uncertain how prominent and dangerous "Jehovah's Witnesses" will be in the future. But no doubt they will continue to spread their tenets and harass our congregations, so that a reliable booklet exposing their errors will be necessary. Professor Mayer has gone to great pains in proving the unchristian and antichristian character of this pernicious cult from the writings of their leaders, and nothing of importance in refuting their blasphemous false doctrines has been omitted. The brochure contains nine chapters with two appendices, "Conclusions," a most valuable *resumé*, and "Notes and References," additional references and quotations from the books of the cult. We recommend this brochure to both pastors and laymen for careful study.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

David Livingstone—Missionary and Explorer. By Basil Miller. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 163 pages. \$1.00.

The name of David Livingstone (1813—1873) has a way of lifting the heart of a Christian. He has been called the greatest man in the history of the nineteenth century, a statement that depends largely on one's viewpoint, of course, when one considers other men of that century, such as Napoleon, Lincoln, Gladstone, Bismarck, and others. The fact that he was an explorer, scientist, and geographer, as well as missionary, has caused some to underemphasize his missionary work. However, in Livingstone's own opinion, everything that he did was secondary and subservient to the main objective of his life—to bring the Gospel to the African heathen. The present biography properly makes frequent reference to and gives quotations from Livingstone's writings and personal diary.

W. G. POLACK

David Brainerd, the Man of Prayer. By Oswald J. Smith. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Stiff paper cover. 86 pages. 75 cents.

The life of David Brainerd (1718—1747) is of perennial interest, not particularly because of the great, immediate results of his mission work among the American Indians, but on account of the unusual zeal and fervor for souls which drove him on and on relentlessly until he virtually burned himself out in his work. The fact that this volume is not merely a recital of his life story, but rather a compilation from his diary as recorded in the *Works of Jonathan Edwards* makes it especially valuable. Brainerd's life story has been a source of inspiration to many. William Carey read it and went to India; Robert McCheyne read it and went to the Jews; Henry Martyn read his journal and went to India and Persia, his short life paralleling that of Brainerd in a remarkable way.

W. G. POLACK

Story Talks for Children. By Karl Rest, Pastor of Salem Church, Wanatah, Indiana. Junior Sermons for Boys and Girls. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio. 135 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.00.

These sermonets for children undoubtedly "catch and sustain the interest of the junior boys and girls." As efforts "to grapple in a realistic manner" with problems of Christian life "on the level of childhood experience and in terms understood by children," these addresses are unquestionable successes. Even if their loyalty to the text is sometimes only nominal, nevertheless in their approach to the junior problems they treat, in their abundant use of well-chosen illustrative material, and in the generally direct drive of the subject matter toward a definite application, they excite admiration as models in method. Every pastor who undertakes the difficult task of holding children's attention sermonically will be profited by a study of this little volume.

On the other hand, the steady omission of justification in favor of sanctification and the failure to use the dynamic of the Cross in behalf of the ethics urged is an oversight no less than extraordinary. It is the more remarkable, as a blunder, since one of two Christmas addresses (pp.133,134) speaks movingly of forgiveness and the sacrifice of Calvary, so demonstrating that the author does believe in and preach this basic Christian truth.

RICHARD A. JESSE

Life on the Highest Plane. By Ruth Paxson. Published by the Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, Ill. 310 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$3.00.

This is a book enjoying a wide circulation. Originally published in three volumes in 1928, the lectures are now combined in one book, which is being highly recommended by Fundamentalist periodicals. It is a dangerous book. I do not refer to such untenable views as, e. g., that "man is a trinity, spirit, soul, and body" (pp.32—36) or that Is.14:12-14 and Ez.28:15,16 describe the rebellion of Satan against God. Nor do I refer primarily to the millennialistic outlook in the last chapter of the book, where the return of Christ is said to "usher in the last of the divinely ordered ages which condition human life upon the earth; it will register the answer to the prayer "Thy kingdom come," and it will mark the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus Christ, as the seed of David, should be King over His own kingdom upon this earth" (p.275). "When Christ, the King, reigns, there will be social reconstruction" (p.280), "material prosperity" (p.281). There is a far greater danger hidden in this book. The entire description of the life of natural man and that of a Christian is a dangerous blending of truth and falsehood. The author speaks of "human life on three planes" and writes: "The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul has divided the human race into three clearly distinguished groups, and every member of the human family, irrespective of racial or natural inheritance, belongs to one of these groups. God's description of each is so accurate and so true that every person may know with certitude in which class he is" (p.13). While on the basis of 2 Cor.2:14 she correctly tells us "that the natural man refuses to receive the things of the Spirit, they appear mere foolishness unto him. More than that, he cannot know

them because it takes a spiritual mind to discern spiritual truth, and he is without the Holy Spirit" (p.14), she writes on pages 41 and 42: "God offers unto every man the gift of eternal life which he has power to accept or to refuse. To accept it opens the way for him to the highest plane of life, that of the spiritual man; to refuse it leaves him on the lowest plane of life, that of the natural man. The natural man refuses the gift of eternal life, therefore he is 'dead.' Every person who has not accepted from the Father the gift of eternal life bestowed upon him in Christ Jesus, the Son, is described by God as 'dead.'" Scripture rather tells us that since natural man is dead in sins, he refuses and cannot but refuse the gift of eternal life. Only when God has quickened him does he accept this gift.

"The carnal man," we read, "is a Christian because he has obtained sonship through faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Therefore he is rightly related to God. But he has entered into neither the possessions nor the privileges of a son, and his practices are not those becoming his position in the family of God. . . . The carnal man has been renewed through the new birth, but he is still a 'babe in Christ.' He sits at the table of the Lord to partake of His bounties, but he has no appetite nor capacity for 'strong meat.' He subsists on 'milk.' He is not a full grown man. He actually has been united to the Lord Jesus, but he is an 'adulterer,' loving the world and caring far more for its people and pleasures than for Jesus Christ (James 4:4)" (p.19). What a flagrant misapplication and garbling of the apostle's word. The author says explicitly that these "adulterers" are enemies of God. The author calmly assures them that they are "rightly related to God," "united to the Lord Jesus." Yet on page 197 we read: "Men may hold two opinions about 'the world' but not so with God. In James 4:4 he at least leaves no Christian any room whatever for argument regarding his attitude toward and relationship to 'the world' but declares in words of transparent clearness that any Christian who maintains friendship with the world is guilty of adulterous infidelity in his relationship to Christ." And then Rom. 7:22, 23 and Gal. 5:17 are quoted to prove that one of the marks of the carnal Christian is "a life of unceasing conflict" (pp.189,190). What hopeless confusion!

The spiritual man is defined as follows: "The spiritual man having taken the crucified, risen, glorified Christ as Savior, Lord, and Life, lives his life wholly unto God. The Lord Jesus is the center of his life and has undivided control over his whole being. Jesus Christ dominates his thoughts, affections, speech, will, and actions. He has become a partaker of the nature of God so that there are two natures in the spiritual man, but the divine nature is sovereign" (pp.17,18). And the marks of a spiritual Christian? "It is a life of abiding peace" (p.200), "of habitual victory" (p.201). "Victory need not be intermittent but may be habitual. God can cause us *always* in all places, under all circumstances, at all times, in all things, 'to triumph in Christ,' for He is able to *save to the uttermost* them that come unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (p.202). "The carnal man [Note, not the natural man is spoken of] is under the power of the law of sin. It operates in his life, bringing him much of the

time under its dominion. But there is another and a higher law at work in the believer, and as he yields himself to its mighty power, the spiritual man is delivered from the law of sin and death. Herein lies his habitual victory over all known sin" (p.203). What sad confusion! Into what unfathomable depths of despair may this description of a "spiritual Christian" hurl a believing child of God who in spite of his daily battle against sin and his daily struggle for perfection cannot attain "habitual victory" and whose peace of conscience is often disturbed by the memories of sins and failings and shortcomings! As long as he lives, even the spiritual Christian, who as far as his new man is concerned does not sin and cannot sin, will have to fight that very battle described by that truly spiritual Christian Paul, Rom.7:18-23; and he will often sigh with Paul, Rom.7:24; yet he will always find comfort and consolation for his conscience harassed by sins daily committed and strength for renewed strife and evernew victories in the precious blood of His Savior, Rom. 7:25.

TH. LAETSCH

They Called Him Father. The Life Story of John Christian Frederick Heyer. By E. Theodore Bachmann. Published by the Muhlenburg Press. Philadelphia. 342 pages. \$1.75.

This biography of "Father" Heyer (1793—1873), the first missionary in foreign fields from the Lutheran Church in America, was published as a contribution to the centennial of the beginning of Heyer's work in India. Aside from the many interesting facts brought forth in this well-written biography, concerning Heyer's antecedents, his family life, his personal interests and peculiarities, we believe that there are particularly two features of the volume that make it a book that should be in every pastor's library. The first in Heyer's ministry in the East and his work as pioneer home missionary in the Middle West and the Northwest of our country. The author gives authentic information on church conditions, the language question, revivals, etc., as they affected the Lutheran churches in the East, information that is the result of careful historical research. As we are acquainted with the author personally and have had many pleasant and profitable discussions with him on questions pertaining to the history of our Church in this country, we know that he is a very painstaking student of the available sources in this field. The second in Heyer's work of establishing the first American Lutheran mission field in far-off India, a field which today numbers some 200,000 Christians. His first term as foreign missionary covered the period from 1841 to 1846, the second from 1847 to 1857. The next twelve years were spent here in the home mission field, during which he founded the Minnesota Synod. His last term in India was from 1869 to 1871. He was nearly 77 years old when he appeared before the sessions of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and pleaded that the Rajahmundry field should not be transferred to the Church Missionary Society of the Anglicans, and he himself offered to go back to India to reorganize the work. "Although I am nearly 77 now, I am willing to go to India myself and reorganize that work." "Will Father Heyer tell us how soon that would be?" "I am ready now!" That illustrates the missionary zeal of this interesting and inspiring character.

W. G. POLACK

Bible Plants for American Gardens. By Eleanor Anthony King. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1941. 203 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$2.00.

This is an interesting, valuable, and, in fact, a delightful book. One might think, from its title, that the contents would be just about what one might look for in a good Bible dictionary or cyclopedia with regard to the plant life of the Holy Land. But the author not only presents a most comprehensive background for her entire topic, she manages to arouse interest in the flowers and trees and shrubs which she so skilfully describes. The fruits, the trees, the herbs, the flowers, the perfumes and precious woods, the reeds and the rushes, even the thorns and thistles, they all are presented to the delighted reader in a fascinating array. And all through the book the author offers some very practical suggestions about planting gardens with Bible plants to give a better appreciation and understanding of the Bible stories in which they are mentioned. It occurred to us that one of the finest things many parish-schools might do, if they have a small piece of ground for a garden, is to start a corner for the cultivation of Bible flowers, herbs, shrubs, and even trees. It would certainly be one of the finest ways of stimulating the interest of children in a most interesting topic and would enliven Bible-history instruction. Some of the less hardy plants and flowers mentioned in the Bible may even be grown in the average home. The author shows a picture of a fig-tree only eight inches high and yet showing all the characteristics, even the fruit as referred to in the Bible. If nothing else, the book will prove a valuable addition to the library of a school or a Sunday-school for the use of both the older pupils and the teachers.

P. E. KRETMANN

Poems with Power to Strengthen the Soul. Compiled by James Mudge. Abingden-Cokesbury Press. New York. 308 pages. \$1.39.

This is a revised and enlarged edition of this collection comprising poets "from Horace and Homer to our modern minstrels," indexed according to authors and first lines. The selections are grouped topically under such headings as Consecration, Love, Hope, Jesus, etc. The price is very reasonable. Our pastors will find many worth-while and quotable pieces among the many items offered.

W. G. POLACK

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Dare to Decide. By Ralph W. Neighbor. 135 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Fishing for Men. By H. W. Ellis. 187 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.50.

A Course in Bible Doctrine and Missions for Juniors. By Hilda I. Copley. 69 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, 35 cents.

Movie Mad America. By U. E. Harding. 55 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, 25 cents.

