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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.

**The Babylonian Genesis. The Story of the Creation.** By Alexander Heidel. Research Assistant on the Assyrian Dictionary project of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill. 131 pages, plus 13 pages containing 18 illustrations. Price, \$1.50.

Dr. Heidel of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, a member of our Missouri Synod and a graduate of Concordia Seminary, has written this scholarly, learned book with the evident intention of defending the divine character of the account of the creation of the world as it is given to us in the book of Genesis. He examines the so-called Babylonian Genesis known to scholars as *Enuma elish*, which unbelieving scholars have claimed to be the source of our Biblical account of the beginning of the world, and he shows the vast differences existing between the Babylonian and the Mosaic narratives. Since Dr. Heidel, ever since he left Concordia Seminary, has devoted himself to a study of the languages and literatures of the ancient Mesopotamian countries, he is well qualified for an investigation of the topics he treats. He meets the unbelieving scholars on their own ground and demonstrates that their views are untenable. The main body of the treatise is divided into four chapters, having these headings: 1) *Enuma elish*; 2) Other Babylonian Creation Stories; 3) Excerpts from Damascius and Berossus; 4) Old Testament Parables. The first chapter contains the story of the finding of the tablets on which the ancient narrative is found, together with information as to the origin of the work and a translation of the document preserved for us on seven tablets. The translation is copiously provided with explanatory or supplementing footnotes. Dr. Heidel points out correctly that the *Enuma elish* really should not be called the Babylonian creation account, but rather the story of the conflict between the gods of Babylonia. As one reads his translation of this work, one is reminded strongly of the Theogony of Hesiod with its weird, fantastic fables of the contests involving Kronos, Zeus, the Titans, and the Giants. If anybody is impressed by claims made by the so-called Pan-Babylonians, let him read this so-called epic, and there is not much fear that he will continue to stand in awe of such claims. Dr. Heidel deserves our sincere thanks for making this ancient work accessible to us in a convenient form.

While upholding definitely the divine, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the author does not deny that there may be some relation between the Babylonian and the Biblical accounts. His idea is that Moses may have employed some of the phraseology and forms of description found in the Babylonian document. As a parallel he points to the well-known circumstance that Old Testament writers used secular works in drawing up the inspired narrative, being, of course, led to do so by the Spirit of God. In passing he mentions Paul's use in 1 Cor. 15:33

of a verse from the *Thais* of Menander, where the Apostle does not give a hint that he is quoting. In the same connection he mentions Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12, where the Apostle declares that what he is saying is something ancient poets have said. The underlying thought, of course, is that what these secular sources state is true and is given the stamp of correctness by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The illustrations included at the end of the volume are fascinating. Attention should be drawn especially to the "Restoration of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar (604—562 B. C.) as seen from the western bank of the Euphrates" (Figure 11), and "Restoration of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar as seen from the north end of the procession street. . . . To the right are the so-called 'hanging gardens'" (Figure 12). W. ARNT.

**A Child's Story of the World and Its People.** By Amelia C. Krug. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 176 pages. Price, \$1.00.

**The Church of Our Fathers.** By Roland H. Bainton. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 248 pages. Price, \$2.50.

**A Short History of Christianity.** Written in Collaboration by Archibald G. Baker, Editor; Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., John T. McNeill, Matthew Spinka, Winfred E. Garrison, William W. Sweet. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 279 pages. Price, \$2.00.

**The Growth of the Christian Church.** By Robert Hastings Nichols, Professor of Church History, Auburn Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary. Revised Edition. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 380 pages. Price, \$2.00.

Four history textbooks, issued within half a year! Interest in history seems to be increasing! Which is commendable; in times like the present, when the world is shaken to its foundations, social and economic institutions which have stood firm for centuries are crashing, and the entire temple of civilization seems tottering on the brink of dissolution, it is well to take a bird's-eye view of past history, to note an omnipotent Providence ruling the affairs of man and ever and again bringing order out of chaos, and to turn away with the renewed conviction that all's well with the world because God is still in His heaven. — The first title is a foundation book for the study of history, written by a teacher who understands the language and the ideas of children. She tells the story of the world to the 8—10-year-olds in a method that is admirable; in continuous form, real children linking up the information they are getting with their own experiences. The early periods of world's history are, of course, traversed with seven-league boots. More space is devoted to American history. Bible and secular history are well correlated, impressing upon the little reader at once that there is only one history, as there is only one Creator and Ruler of the universe. Every chapter is followed by questions and suggestions for those who assist the children in their studies. It is a book that can be recommended without any reservations whatsoever.

*The Church of our Fathers*, too, was designed to appeal to the minds and imaginations of younger readers. The author, professor of Church

History at the Yale Divinity School, evidently had children in mind when he planned and wrote the book; he presents an almost continuous collection of adventure and hero stories; yet every page carries marks of competent scholarship; the author has the faculty of summing up in one brief striking sentence the essentials of an event or a movement. The illustrations are unique, reproduced from old manuscripts, drawings, coins, and woodcuts, always amusing, almost in the nature of cartoons. A vein of whimsical humor runs through the whole text, cropping out in unexpected places. Example: Pope Gregory "became interested in the English because one day in the market place at Rome he saw some English boys for sale as slaves. 'Who are they?' he asked. 'Angles,' was the reply. To which Gregory, who had had no experience with English boys, responded, 'Not Angles, but angels.'" All this makes it interesting reading—for mature students; but I doubt whether the average 10-year-old is sufficiently sophisticated to enjoy reading it. Moreover, the evident intention of the author is to make it amusing, to turn out the ridiculous side in every instance, which, it seems to me, is not the proper way of teaching the history of their Church to the youth of the Church. A perfectly absurd extract from a sermon is given (p.27) as an example of preaching in the early Church; I suppose it is authentic; but to cite it as characteristic of the preaching of the Church surely gives a false picture to the young reader. The whole book—to quote another reviewer—"leaves a feeling of endless and perhaps pointless see-sawing struggle. I miss a note of triumphant faith and a sense of a thrilling movement which I believe should be present." Do we get an inkling of the reason for this when the author sidesteps any clear, definite assertion of the resurrection of Christ? And near the end of the book he waxes eloquent in an attempt to show that we cannot, in reason, absolutely deny the possibility of miracles; but it is not at all important whether Christ did the wonders told about Him or not. There is not even an allusion to the atoning work of Christ in the book, nor any indication that the author believes in the divine institution and the divine, eternal purpose of the Church. The teacher will find valuable material in the book; but do not give it a place in your school or Sunday school library.

The *Short History of Christianity* was written by six members of the faculty of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, each treating that era of history with which he is most familiar; Professor Shepherd *The Rise of Christianity and Christianity and the Fall of Rome*; Professor McNeill *Christianity in Medieval Europe and Christianity in the Reformation Era*; Professor Spinka *The History of Eastern Orthodoxy*; Professor Garrison *Christianity in Modern Europe*; Professor Sweet *Christianity in the Americas*; the editor, Professor Baker, adds a chapter on *Christianity Encircles the Globe*. The book is offered as a digest of Church History, "planned for the use of the serious reader who has only a limited time at his disposal. It is also designed as a textbook for study classes." It is adapted for the latter purpose, divided into 32 sections; in the hands of an experienced teacher it may profitably be used as a textbook, though he will have to make numerous corrections owing to the fact that it was written by liberal theologians. As

a reader for the information of the man who has only a limited time at his disposal it will hardly do; it is too brief; too many things are merely mentioned without explanation, for lack of space. I'm afraid all such attempts to build a royal road to the knowledge of history are vain. This is no criticism of the authors; they tried to meet the rushing spirit of the times, to furnish the man who is in a hurry a quick lunch; but, like the advertisements in the pulp magazines: "Learn to play the piano in two lessons!"—it just can't be done!

The fourth title on our list is not a new book, but a standard text revised and brought up to date. It is designed for educational institutions and for adult classes. I know of no better book for this purpose on the market. It is compact, yet comprehensive, offering a third more material than the previously mentioned book. It is divided into 18 chapters (which for class study must perhaps be divided again); questions for review and an adequate list of reference works for further reading are added to each chapter. The author's skill shown in the selection of his material; his clear and simple style of writing are admirable. A sober historical judgment governs his evaluations; you will need few question marks in the margin. One of the things which at once predisposed this reviewer in the author's favor was his statement (p.4) that "the Hebrews had indeed received a *revelation of God and His will* not possessed by the Greeks." Such a confession is rare among recent authors. Until we have a textbook of our own for the instruction of our young people, use this book; it will not disappoint you.

THEO. HOYER

**Why Believe? Sermons to Establish Faith.** By W.R. Johnson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 141 pages, 5¼×7¼. Price, \$1.00.

The thirteen brief sermons contained in this book were delivered by the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Galveston, Tex., before high school and college groups with a view to win his hearers for Christ and a joyous profession of the Christian faith. Their rich apologetic and earnest evangelistic elements, their wealth of illustrative material, their striking rebuttal of infidelity, their unusual depth of thought, and their excellent organization entitle them to careful study. The viewpoint from which they are written is that of a grateful Fundamentalist who has returned from Modernism to the faith of his fathers and desires that also others should come back. The theme of the first address forms the title of the book, "Why Believe?" The "Why Believe" Idea is then applied to "Immortality," "God," "The Bible," "Jesus," "The Deity of Christ," "The Atonement," "The Resurrection," "Hell," "Heaven," "Bible Study," "Prayer," "The Church." All of the sermons are interesting, instructive, and convincing, and are written with deep piety and from personal conviction. As many other apologists, the author, however, occasionally overstates his arguments from reason and experience, while at other times his theology is not Scriptural. On page 28, for example, he separates faith from revelation and places it above the latter. "The testimony of faith transcends even that of reason or revelation." As a matter of fact, there is true testimony of faith only as long as faith clings to revelation, that is, Holy Scripture. On page 43 he states that "Revela-

tion is definitely His [God's] own book in a sense that cannot be said of even the Gospels," thus placing the Book of Revelation (an *Antilegomenon*) on a higher plane than the Gospels, though these are *Homologoumena*. On page 45 he claims that the sacred writers wrote the Scriptures in five different languages—Hebrew, Babylonian, Syrophoenician, Aramaic, and Greek—which simply is not true. On page 51, following Karl Barth, he writes: "All Scripture is inspired, but only that Scripture is inspired to the individual soul which is picked out and illuminated by the Spirit." There are additional historical and theological errors in the book, detracting greatly from its value. But for the pastor who knows how to discriminate between right or wrong it will prove itself a useful help in refuting unbelief and exhibiting the essentials of the Christian faith in a convincing way.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

**The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal.** Compiled by W. G. Polack. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. XIII and 679 pages. Price, \$4.00.

The author here presents the results of studies pursued while the committee entrusted with the revision of our *Hymnal* was at work. The volume contains a wealth of material, as a mere notation of the contents will show. There is, on 468 pages, a history of the text of the 660 hymns and the 371 tunes contained in the *Hymnal*, together with the original text of translated hymns and of the stanzas omitted in the present selection. Next there are 133 pages of Biographical and Historical Notes on the Authors and Composers, with a list of each author's or composer's contributions to this *Hymnal*. After a bibliography of hymnological reference works various indexes follow; this is the section of the book that will meet with a special welcome on the part of the pastor and the teacher. There is an Index of Biblical References; a Table of Hymns for the Feasts, Festivals, and Sundays of the Church Year; an Index of the First Lines of Original Hymns (in the original language); an Index of First Lines of Stanzas (except of first stanzas); an Alphabetical and a Metrical Index of Tunes; a Topical Index (24 pages, small print); an Alphabetical Index of Authors, of Composers, and of Translators; finally an Index of First Lines.—While the first two sections contain reference material and will perhaps be used only occasionally, a pastor will need these indexes every Sunday, for every service, for it will take years of use before we shall know the contents of our *Hymnal* so well that we are able to turn, at a moment's notice, to the hymn appropriate for the day and for the subject of our sermon, before we can thus make full use of the treasures stored up in our *Hymnal* without the help which this book offers.

THEO. HOYER

**On Paths of Destiny.** A manual for mission study groups. Synodical Department of Missionary Education and Publicity, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 120 pages. Price, 25 cents.

This is the first of a new series of manuals published in accordance with a resolution of Synod in 1941. The *Proceedings* (p.198) announce the publication of four volumes, the series to be sold at \$1.00, and the

remark is added: "This price is made possible by a subsidy." No one can look at this first volume and turn the leaves but a minute without realizing that 25 cents does not nearly cover the cost of production. It is a well-printed and beautifully illustrated little volume, which presents a survey of the great task of missions and does it in a manner hitherto not yet attempted. It includes narrative and description as interesting as fiction, presenting a close-up of the labors of those who work in the foreign fields. A very fascinating book, which should rouse interest in missions among the most indifferent. As announced in the *Proceedings* by Pastor L. Meyer, director of the department, the book is intended for general reading; for young people and L. L. L. study groups; for women's organizations, day school teachers, and Sunday school teachers. It will be welcomed by all who desire material for the preparation of lectures on the missionary program of the Church.

TH. GRAEBNER

**On Wings of Healing.** Prayers and Readings for the Sick and Shut-in. Compiled by John W. Doberstein. Published by The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 104 pages, 8¾×11¼. Price, \$2.00.

Under seventeen subdivisions this book offers prayers and brief meditations in the form of Scripture passages, poetry, and prose for the various needs and troubles arising in life. Beside many fine and beautiful Christian prayers, there are others not as satisfactory. The size of the book makes it rather inconvenient for sick and feeble people. 14 pages are devoted to the title, Foreword, Table of Contents, and 34 pages to the titles of the subdivisions. This may explain to some extent the rather high price. The binding, material, and printing are of high quality.

TH. LAETSCH

**Corrigendum.** The installment of the article "Verbal Inspiration—a Stumbling-Block to the Jews and Foolishness to the Greeks" in the August number should have prefixed to it the numeral V.

