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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review

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

Strengthen Thy Brethren. Pointers from Peter for power in Christian living. A devotional exposition of the First Epistle of Peter. By Howard W. Ferrin, President Providence Bible Institute. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 190 pages, 5×8. Price, \$1.25.

Coming from an author who believes in the inerrancy of the Scriptures and who wishes to exalt our divine Savior, this book can be recommended to our pastors. It is written in a simple style, without any efforts at oratory, and endeavors to fix attention on the chief thoughts in the First Epistle of St. Peter. The book does not intend to be a commentary explaining all linguistic and other problems that arise as one peruses this Epistle either in the original or the English translation. The author's purpose is to furnish a work that is devotional and edifying. His method will become somewhat apparent from topics of various chapters which we cite: 1. Comforting Truth; 2. The Living Hope and Its Comforts; 3. Singing in the Fire; 4. So Great Salvation. Other writers to whom he refers us and whose works he himself drew on are Archbishop Leighton and Dr. F. B. Meyer. Quite often gems of spiritual poetry are included emphasizing the truths which are taught in the holy text.

In explaining the expression "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (1:2) the author did not entirely apprehend the meaning of the Apostle, although with some of the things he says one has to be in full agreement. He writes, "We realize that this word 'elect' has confused many minds. It is certain to do so because we know little or nothing of the secret transactions of God in eternity. He alone knows the causes of His choice, but that does not mean that we can argue, as some have argued, that if they are not the elect of God, they cannot be saved. Contrariwise, we hold that one *knows* whether he is the 'elect' of God, for we read in John 6:37 the words of our Lord, 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me'" (p. 13). The author should not have rejected as wrong the statement "If they are not the elect of God, they cannot be saved." Only God's elect attain salvation. When President Ferrin continues, "Have you come to Christ? Have you been attracted to Him and acknowledged Him as your Lord and Savior? If so, then you may assure your heart that you are one of the 'elect' of God and have been included within what F. B. Meyer has called 'that mystic circle'" (p. 13), he expresses a thought to which we heartily subscribe.

The expression "according to the foreknowledge of God" causes him some difficulty. He writes, "None can know the depth of meaning contained in these words, but we are of the opinion they mean that from all eternity God has known those who would accept the overtures of mercy. Shall we say that He foresaw there were to be children of faith

who would cleave to Christ and therefore prove themselves to be saints of the faith; and all these He foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son? What a wonderful thing it is to be known of God from eternity. In Ephesians, the first chapter, we read that we have been chosen in Christ 'before the foundation of the world.' Truly, we come upon depths of mystery which our finite minds can little understand." The humbleness of spirit manifested by the author and his willingness to believe in all simplicity the teachings of God are admirable, but his analysis of the term "foreknowledge of God" is not satisfactory. "Foreknowledge" according to the way in which the sacred writers use the term in speaking of God's election means more than a mere advance knowledge of what is coming in the future. It includes an act of God's will, a *nosse cum affectu et effectu*, as our Lutheran fathers correctly said. That such interpretation is in keeping with New Testament teaching is evident from the Ephesians passage to which the author himself refers.

With much interest we read what the author says on the celebrated passage 3:18-22. In dwelling on the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison he correctly says (p.139), "We cannot hold that Christ in the interval between His crucifixion and resurrection went into another world and preached deliverance to either those righteous ones who were suffering in purgatory, waiting to be delivered at His coming, or Old Testament saints who were found faithful." He emphasizes properly that Peter does not say that Christ preached deliverance, but simply that He *preached*. His explanation is the one which was sponsored as long ago as the days of St. Augustine, which Church Father took the view that the Apostle is here referring to the preaching which Christ did as the *logos asarkos* through Noah before the Flood. While this interpretation asserts an important truth, we hold that it does not express what St. Peter here states, namely, the descent of Christ into hell to make known to the evil spirits that He had conquered. On the much discussed passage 1 Pet. 4:6 President Ferrin correctly observes that the preaching mentioned there refers to the preaching addressed to people while they were living but who now are dead. Generally speaking, we believe that our pastors and teachers will find much that is useful and beautiful in this work.

W. ARNDT

The Christian and the War. By Charles Clayton Morrison. Willett, Clark, and Company. 145 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.50.

Does the Bible Sanction War? (Why I am Not a Pacifist.) By Harold Snider. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 158 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Should a Christian Go to War? By William L. Pettingill, D. D. Fundamental Truth Publishers, Findlay, Ohio. 14 pages, paper cover. Price, 15 cents.

Dr. Morrison's book, a reproduction of editorials which appeared in *The Christian Century* in 1942 after the outbreak of the war with Japan and Germany, asks the Christian to take an impossible position on the question of war. Before the outbreak of a war the Christian must be a pacifist and condemn war as sin; in the midst of war, however, he

must give up that position. And the position of the "Christian militarist" ("By a Christian militarist is meant one who defends war as morally righteous and sanctioned by the will of God. The word 'militarist' is not used in the invidious sense of one who is a mere warmonger. The militarist we have in mind is a Christian, a thoughtful and devoted Christian whose convictions as to his duty are no less a matter of conscience than are the convictions of the conscientious objector as to war," p. 70) is at no time justifiable, neither before nor in war. In war the Christian must become a realist, one "who denies that the war can be adjudged righteous under any code of civilized or Christian morality" (p. 111) but knows that it is his duty to support the war; he must tell the pacifist: "Now that the war is here, you have no recourse save to accept its necessity and to fight in it, penitently, until it comes to an end in accordance with the inherent forces which constitute war." (P. 138.) The realist tells the Christian "militarist" that in wartime the distinction between a just and an unjust war must no longer be made. "The question of the ethics of self-defense in an actual war situation is irrelevant, academic, and meaningless." "In a war situation the canons of right and wrong which are the criteria of ethical behavior in peacetime do not apply." (Pp. 17, 118.) Dr. Morrison would classify Augustine as a Christian militarist ("Augustine drew a distinction between a 'just war' and an 'unjust war.' It is right, he said, for a Christian to engage in a 'just war,'" p. 71) who gave the Christians bad advice.—Dr. Morrison buttresses his position with arguments such as these: "In discussing the issue, we will not be misled by the fallacious analogies of war with the use of police force, or with force in general." (P. 11.) "Jesus left us no specific example for our conduct in a war situation. He did not live in a war situation. He lived in a prewar situation." (P. 139.)—With some sections of our book the Bible theologian will find himself in full agreement. "The Lord of history has called the nations before his judgment seat to receive his verdict: Guilty! One and all, Guilty! Japan, Guilty! Great Britain, Guilty! Germany, Guilty! America, Guilty! A thousand times, declares the Judge of all the earth, have I warned you that the kind of world you were making was contrary to my will. . . . My warnings you heard, and though you flinched under the sting of my rebukes, you would not heed them." . . . (P. 44.) "There is a wide area for moral activity for the Christian and the Christian community in wartime. There is the area of constructive and helpful service to those whom the war has injured or dislocated or exposed to hideous moral temptations. . . . A second open field for Christian action is that of the Church itself. The Christian Church is not at war. But tremendous pressures are being brought to bear to make it a party to the war. . . . A third field: Christian activity is required to guard against hysteria, to combat the hate campaigns, etc." (P. 128 f.)

The treatise *Does the Bible Sanction War?* is a curious mixture of truth and error. It takes issue with "the resolution adopted in 1941 by a certain pacifistic denomination: "That again, true to our historic peace position, we affirm that war is sin, unconditionally and always," a resolution "supported by Matt. 5:44 and 2 Cor. 10:4," (p. 55) and shows

that it does not agree with Scripture. It goes beyond and against Scripture, however, when it declares that "we would be justified in participating in a defensive war, when the life of the Christian Church is at stake." (P.117.) It offers no Scripture proof for the thesis that the Church may and should defend itself with the sword. The proof it offers—"I am set for the defense of the Gospel" (Phil.1:17)—is of a piece with the proof which the pacifists offer for their thesis: 2 Cor. 10:4. We note, too, that the author does not believe in his thesis when he, on page 7, agrees with the statement that "the sword is not to be used in the propagation and maintenance of the Gospel."—Our author is a millennialist and operates with the postponement theory. "God promises Israel a wonderful millennial kingdom. Isaiah's prophecy would have been fulfilled, had the Jews accepted Him. Had Israel bowed sincerely before the lowly Nazarene, their great Messianic kingdom would have become a reality, and world peace and righteousness would have reigned! But they refused Him! They nailed Him to the cross, and the kingdom and its characteristics had to be postponed." (P.100.) Exegesis of John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world (world system, or age). If the kingdom had been for this present order, then would His servants have fought! In just so many words Jesus said: 'If necessary, my servants would resort to armed force to establish the kingdom.'" (P.139 ff.)—The polemics against the pacifists is at times intemperate and extremely unjust. For instance, "All of this leads us to make a statement regarding pacifism which can scarcely be denied, namely: That most pacifists are what they are because of a mortal fear of physical conflict." (P.140.)

The little pamphlet *Should a Christian Go to War?* instructs the Christian that when the Government, in the performance of its duty, draws the sword, he must support it. "This word, 'He beareth not the sword in vain,' is God's warrant for the policeman's club or revolver, the soldier's bayonet or rifle, the army's big siege gun, etc." Dr. Morrison will not hear of "the fallacious analogies of war with the use of police force or with force in general." But we are certainly not committing a fallacy when we connect the idea of force with the "sword" of which St. Paul speaks, the force of the policeman and the force of the Army. And when our pamphlet calls attention to the instructions which John the Baptist gave the soldiers and asks: "There were Christian soldiers in the apostolic churches: why were they not commanded to leave the army? Why did not the Apostle Peter tell Cornelius the centurion to resign his commission?" men ought no longer to say: "Jesus left us no specific example for our conduct in a war situation. He lived in a prewar situation."

TH. ENGELDER

A Digest of Christian Thinking. By Charles S. Macfarland. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 192 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.50.

Current Religious Thought: a Digest. By Charles S. Macfarland. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 185 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.50.

These are the fourth and fifth volumes in Dr. Macfarland's series of a "reader's digest" in modern theological literature. Dr. Macfarland,

the secretary emeritus of the Federal Council of Churches, seems to be acquainted with all important current religious books. Of the hundreds of religious books that have appeared in 1940 and 1941 he has selected some ninety volumes for a brief review and evaluation. The selection of books is satisfactory from the viewpoint of liberal theology, and these digests give the reader a fairly complete view of modern trends in religious thought. Dr. Macfarland groups the various books under such headings as: Current Religious Philosophy and Ethics; The Church and the Kingdom; Revision of Christian Education; Christian Thinking in Great Britain; The New Order of Mankind; Re-Examinations of the Social Gospel. Naturally, it is very difficult to do justice to an author in a brief review or a sketchy synopsis. We can appreciate Dr. Macfarland's difficulty in reducing Brunner's *Man in Revolt*, a book of some 600 pages, to three short pages. Niebuhr's *Nature and Destiny of Man* receives seven pages, and Dr. Macfarland has succeeded fairly well to find his way through Niebuhr's "sometimes labyrinthian discursus." We have read a number of the volumes discussed by Macfarland and found that his analyses and synopses are quite satisfactory. Since it is impossible and indeed unnecessary (we are tempted to say unprofitable) to read all the books on current theology, digests such as prepared by Dr. Macfarland are extremely helpful, especially since Dr. Macfarland is personally acquainted with a large number of authors whose books he reviews, and he approaches his task with a sympathetic attitude toward the authors, with the possible exception of K. Barth. F. E. MAYER

Reality in Preaching. By Russell D. Snyder, Otto A. Piper, Oscar F. Blackwelder, and Fred C. Wiegman. The Muhlenberg Press. Philadelphia. Price, \$1.50.

Dean E. E. Flack of the Hamma Divinity School, who wrote the foreword for this volume, explains that it contains the addresses delivered on the "Kessler Lecture Foundation by a group of distinguished clergymen at an Institute on Preaching held in Hamma Divinity School of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio."

Four theologians have contributed these lectures. Dr. Snyder is professor of practical theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia. Dr. Piper is professor of theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. For many years he was a teacher of theology in German and English universities. He came to America in 1937, following his service as interpreter at the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences. Dr. Blackwelder is pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Washington, D. C. Dr. Wiegman is president of Midland College and Western Theological Seminary, Fremont, Nebr.

Naturally, neither the content nor the manner of treatment of these lectures is of equal quality, but that does not detract from the value of the book, which is distinctly worth the attention of every preacher who still takes to heart the admonition of St. Paul "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that *thy* profiting may appear to all," 1 Tim. 4:15. True, there are even now many treatises on homiletics on the market. It is also true that no man becomes a good preacher by merely reading or studying homiletics, just as no man

becomes a good musician by reading essays on music, but preachers do need the instruction and stimulation which may be obtained by reading what successful leaders have said and written on this subject. Some go so far as to say that every preacher should read one new book on homiletics every year. We may not be willing to go as far as that; yet the very eagerness to improve will create a hunger for good homiletical advice. While we need not agree with everything taught on this subject, the very antagonism which is stirred by a controversial statement is helpful and stimulating. The preacher in his reading of such books is to follow the advice of Lord Bacon: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention."

Dr. Snyder shows that he is at home in Lutheran principles, for he states that we Lutherans "see no saving power, no balm for a sinful and aching world, in the specious humanism that has supplanted the Word of God in many American pulpits." He regrets, however, that so few Lutheran ministers have published volumes of sermons, while almost every sectarian preacher of any prominence has published at least one such volume. He also emphasizes the importance for every pastor of the study of the Bible; no preacher can know the Bible too well. That certainly harks back to Luther and our old teachers.

Dr. Piper insists that many laymen are sick and tired of sermons which treat social, political, economical, or literary issues. They are crying out for doctrinal preaching. He writes, "That as witnesses we have to present Jesus Christ Himself as the inescapable fact in the life of the race; not the 'historical Jesus' of liberal theology only, but Him who was raised from the dead and is now among us as the living and triumphant Lord. There are His incarnation and His earthly ministry, His atoning death, His glorious resurrection, and the sure promise of His return. They are historical facts, undeniable and inescapable, and they alone are apt to satisfy the anxious longing of our contemporaries. These facts reach right into our lives because Jesus as the risen Lord makes us contemporaneous with Himself." He condemns "subjectivism" and calls for "objective" affirmations of faith. We must have preachers who speak with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees. Dr. Piper's chapter on "History and Preaching" is also distinctly worth reading.

The most impressive essay in this book is that of Dr. Blackwelder, who points out that before a man can be a preacher he must be a person. He touches upon a very important point which has not been given sufficient attention, that is, the importance and value of the preacher himself in his mental, physical, and spiritual make-up. The Latin word *ingenium* expresses exactly what we mean, but it is very difficult to translate. The word *personality* comes close to being a translation of it, but still the connotations in the two words differ. This writer also touches upon a subject which is rarely treated, namely, the physical

stamina of the preacher. He does not deny that men with physical handicaps have done good work. Paul had his thorn in the flesh; Luther at times suffered intense physical pain and disability—but, oh, how they did work when they could work! However, few men have the “ingenia” which Luther and Paul had. Moreover, we remember that both Luther and Paul groaned because of their handicaps and wished intensely to be rid of them. Dr. Blackwelder also reiterates the prayer of St. Augustine: “Oh, fill me with Thy goodness, Lord, until my very heart o'erflow.”

Altogether, this book is distinctly worth while. I am convinced that the pastor who begins to read this volume will read some sections of it again and again.

M. S. SOMMER

A Living Church at Work. By a Committee of the United Danish Ev. Lutheran Church. Danish Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebraska. 123 pages, 5½×8¼. Price, 50 cents.

This book was printed by resolution of the 1941 convention of the United Danish Ev. Lutheran Church, having been prepared by a committee on evangelization, elected in 1938. It is to serve as “a true expression of the faith, life, and practice of our Church. As directive material, it contains just what we would like to place in the hands of our Church members and others. It will make its contribution towards the promotion of spiritual life and Christian service in our congregations.” We have read the book with great interest. There are a few sentences that we would have expressed differently in order to avoid misunderstanding, and we do not believe that the slogan “Accept the Christian religion by uniting with the Church” and the salutation in the sermon “Dear Christian Friends,” must be prohibited or guarded against because there are hypocrites in the visible church of God. While the congregation at Corinth had many faults and shortcomings, yet Paul does not hesitate to address the congregation as the church of God which is at Corinth and speaks of the members as such as are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. 1 Cor. 1:2. We recommend this report to our pastors as a thought-provoking and action-stimulating book.

TH. LAETSCH

When Christ Went to Calvary. Lenten sermons by Walter F. Troeger and Harry E. Olsen. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. 5½×8½, 82 pp. \$1.00.

Two series of sermons for Lententide are presented in this volume. The Rev. Walter F. Troeger of Santa Monica, California, furnishes a sequence of sermons based on incidents and personalities in the Passion history. The sermon for Maundy Thursday concerns Holy Communion and takes Prov. 4:11-18 for a text. The Rev. Harry Olsen of Detroit discusses the general theme “Salvation,” on the basis of a variety of texts; he appends a sermon on the Resurrection. These sermons are in the best tradition of Synod's preaching. They reveal a humble deference to the doctrine of Scripture and the Catechism. But they endeavor to be crisp and timely in application.

Sermon series, particularly for Lent, make possible a preaching treatment which may diverge from the standard. A verse, a word, can

become the propulsion for a sermon, since it stands in relation to the entire series. The doctrinal pattern of the individual address need not be as complete as in a standard parish sermon, at times, since background or application may be taken care of in further units of the series. These sermons, too, achieve their full value for the reader and student when taken as a whole.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

The Rainbow Over Calvary. By W.G. Polack. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 82 pages, 5½×8. Price, \$1.00.

This book has appeared just in time for the present Lenten season. Dr. Polack has furnished meditations on the Seven Words of Christ on the cross. These meditations are brief, well written, and edifying. They furnish thought for sermons and are well adapted to be read in the home during Lent. The large type makes for easy reading. In accordance with its content the book has been given a purple binding.

J. H. C. FAITZ

Lutheran Annual 1943. Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 208 pages. Price, 15 cents.

Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1943 nach der Geburt unsers Herrn Jesu Christi. Derselbe Umfang und Preis.

An additional reason for spreading these publications at the present time is given by the publishers in their announcement: "Never before in the history of our Church have our members been scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land—and beyond its borders—as they are today! 40,000 of our Church's youth are in the armed forces. Another 60,000 have been uprooted and scattered abroad in our country's vast program of industrial expansion. One out of every nine of our communicants has joined the great American migration! Keep them with the Church! Keep the Church with them! Give them the *Lutheran Annual!* The *Lutheran Annual* will give them the name and location of every church affiliated with us at home or abroad; the name and address of every pastor and teacher of the Synodical Conference in this and foreign lands; of special value at this time: the listings for Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, etc.; names and addresses of officials, boards, and institutions of our Church; the Walther League Service Directory, giving names and addresses of Christian Service secretaries in cities of more than 2,000 population; addresses of Lutheran hospice homes, hospitals, information bureaus, etc.; a calendar, a table of Bible readings for every day of the year, valuable statistical information, and numerous articles on various phases of the Church's work. Make your goal: A *Lutheran Annual* for every Lutheran home."—CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY cannot do better than to subscribe to all of this!

THEO. HOYER