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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.

Why Do I Believe the Bible Is God's Word? By William Dallmann. Concordia Publishing House. Fifth Printing. 138 pages, 4x6. Price, \$.60.

The divine certainty of the divine origin of the Bible is wrought in us by the Bible itself, by the Holy Ghost through the Bible. In the words of the *Introduction* to our booklet: "How can I know that the Bible is God's Word? . . . Let the Holy Ghost work the conviction in my soul and thus produce divine certainty that cannot be shaken." Why, then, should we present and study the human arguments for the Bible? "They cannot indeed produce divine certainty, but they may perchance lead a man to give the divine method a fair trial. The so-called external proofs for the Bible will compel a candid man to think well of the Bible as a book. . . . By means of these external proofs we may ward off the assaults of the enemy; we may even take the field and attack the enemy, silence his guns, and rout him in confusion." And these proofs, such as the fulfillment of the prophecies, the triumph of the Bible over all attacks, and its blessed influence, are here given in great abundance and presented with convincing force.

TH. ENGELDER

The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. An Address by Vilhelm Koren. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 39 pages. Price, 10 cents a copy or \$1.00 a dozen.

It was indeed a praiseworthy venture for the "Faith in Action Movement" (Board of Christian Education) of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America to publish as a church centennial contribution Dr. Koren's unforgettable synodical address, delivered at the General Convention of the Norwegian Synod, Chicago, 1908, in this excellent translation (by Rev. John Linnevold) and attractive pamphlet form. Of this address he said: "I should like — if it does not seem presumptuous — to have this speech regarded as my last will and testament to the Norwegian Synod." His rugged, bold confessionalism is reflected in every statement of his treatise, which is divided into the following parts: the "Introduction," "Inspiration," "Objections [to the inspiration of the Scriptures]," "The Higher Criticism," "A Few Characteristics of the Holy Scriptures." Dr. Koren was a diligent and humble Bible student, a thorough theologian, a fearless confessor of the Christian faith, an orthodox Lutheran, an influential church leader, and a faithful pastor and valuable adviser to thousands. He teaches and defends in his treatise verbal and plenary inspiration (though rightly he deprecates a "mechanical inspiration") and the inerrancy and infallibility of the whole Bible because of its divine inspiration. We recommend this timely testimony regarding the Holy Scriptures to our pastors and congrega-

tions for wide distribution. Pastors will rejoice in it; laymen will read it with profit. It is a triumphant, dynamic witness of the divine truth, fascinating and instructive from beginning to end.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Basis of Millennial Faith. By Floyd E. Hamilton. 153 pages. 5¼×7¾. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price, \$1.00.

The author of this volume for years was under the chiliastic spell. There is a hint at the prevalence of the chiliastic error in the author's remark that he was for years a premillennialist, "because that and post-millennialism were the only explanations of prophecy with which he was familiar." Indeed, he observed that a great many premillennialists had never heard of amillennialism or had heard only a distorted version of its beliefs. So-called fundamentalists, so tolerant of error in the doctrine of the Sacraments, of conversion, etc., regard amillennialism as a heresy, and "refuse co-operation in the churches with believers in amillennialism." Rev. Hamilton has made a clean sweep of the whole millennial system in the criticism which he submits in these chapters. There is sufficient analysis of the various millennial schemes to make the antithesis plain to the reader. He treats in a very capable manner the relation of prophecy to fulfillment. Very interesting is his discussion of millennialist exegesis in the chapters which treat "The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares," "The Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats," "Paul's Teaching About the Second Coming," "Revelation Twenty." His discussion of the Apocalypse is excellent. We do not understand how the author can suggest in his opening chapter, and again in his conclusion, that Christians who reject chiliasm should endeavor to work together in the same church home with chiliasts. If it were feasible to make these questions the object of investigation "in the privacy of the study," one might indeed advise patience and consideration. But on the author's own showing, the proponents of chiliasm are fanatical controversialists and propagandists. Besides, the grave doctrinal implications of the dispensationalist error, as set forth by Philip Mauro in his *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, are not touched upon in *The Basis of Millennial Faith*. These deficiencies, however, do not detract from the volume as a keen analysis of millennialist interpretation. The author stresses the authority and inerrancy of the Word of God.

TH. GRAEBNER

World History. A Christian Interpretation by Albert Hyma, Professor of History, University of Michigan, with Exercises for Student Activities by J. F. Stach, Principal of the Nazareth Lutheran School, Detroit, Mich. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 435 pages. Price, \$1.58.

The subtitle of this book indicates its chief claim to consideration on the pages of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY. That is, at the same time, the chief point of interest for the pastors who read these reviews: the religious viewpoint of the book; can they recommend it, in this case, to their young people, for their Sunday school and day school library? In the present instance that question may be answered with an unqualified yes. For the first time we have here a world's history

which does not present antisciptural theories about the origin of the world, of man, of religion, etc. More: throughout the history of mankind the guiding hand of God is noted by the authors. There is nothing in the book that might endanger the faith of a young Christian or arouse any doubts in him as to, *e. g.*, the harmony between the Scriptural account of Creation and the facts as represented in historical records.—Furthermore, the names of the authors stand for the highest achievements in their particular field. Dr. Hyma has built up an enviable reputation as a Christian historian during his nineteen years of work at the University of Michigan. Dr. Stach, at present teaching at the Concordia High School in Fort Wayne, is a scholar of our own Church, who has been active in historic research. The book presents, therefore, the best product on the market in the field of historic works for the youth of high school level.—To be perfectly honest, however, I feel I must again say what has been repeatedly voiced in these columns: the authors are handicapped in their desire to present an all-round history of the human race by the limited space at their disposal. Dr. Hyma rightly regards the continuity of history as moving not only forward, but in all directions. We have long ago discarded the idea that it is possible to write the history of a country or a nation isolated from the rest of mankind; an event in history is like a stone dropped into a body of water: the resultant waves move in all directions. Moreover, students of history know that the continuity of history moves, if you will, up and down also, like an electric wave from a radio tower, touching on the various strata of human history; political events will influence religious, economic, and social developments in the history of man. Rightly, therefore, Dr. Hyma presents all these phases in this history; the result, however, is that the presentation is so brief that it is doubtful to me whether pupils of that age will understand the text unless much is added by an experienced teacher. An attempt to present the Lutheran Reformation on four and one half small pages is, of course, hopeless.—In addition I would here take the opportunity of voicing an opinion with reference not only nor specially to this book, but many others written for the teen ages. It seems to me that in our desire to “write down” to the understanding of readers in that age authors are inclined to “write down” to too low a level. The object, I suppose, is to reach also the lower intellectual levels of the youth for whom we write. In doing this, however, do we not rob our books of much interest for the average and higher intellect? Take the first pages in this world’s history, the section which is to show that there is no conflict between the Bible and the facts of history: it may be adequate for the pupils of our elementary schools; but a high school student of average faculties may at once become somewhat antagonistic because the text is so evidently “written down” to his understanding, as the author regards it; these first chapters will not satisfy a high school student. We have, of course, the same trouble in teaching classes of various intellectual levels; we feel that we must make our subject matter comprehensible to everyone; the result is that the presentation is robbed of all challenge for the better ones of the class. What to do?

Any attempt of organizing classes on the basis of intelligence quotients has so far proved Utopian. In literature, however, there should be a way out: style and presentation of subject matter may be changed for the various levels.—Christian history scholars hope that this book may be the first in a new line of presentations which we may wholeheartedly recommend to our fellow Christians.

THEO. HOYER

Babylonian Chronology 626 B. C.—A. D. 45. By Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization No. 24. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill. 46 pages, 7×10.

The size of this treatise and the learning it represents are in inverse proportion. With admirable conciseness the authors state the chief facts pertaining to the Babylonian Calendar, especially those that have to do with the insertion of intercalary months. The work consists of three sections. The first treats the Babylonian Calendar. The second has the caption "Kings' Reigns" and gives brief information on the exact date of the beginning and the end of the rule of the individual monarchs up to 146 B. C. The remaining Seleucid and the Parthian kings are merely listed with the years of their reign. The third and largest section has the heading "Tables for the Re-statement of Babylonian Dates in Terms of the Julian Calendar." These tables are highly interesting, once a person immerses himself in them. They begin with the reign of Nabopolassar, 626 B. C., and take us to 356 of the Seleucid era, which is the same as 45 A. D. The method followed in the tables is that for the first day of every Babylonian month its equivalent according to the Julian Calendar is given, so that it is easily possible to find the Julian Calendar date for any *dated* event in the period treated. Thus the death of Alexander the Great occurred on the first day of the month of Simanu. A reference to the table for the fourteenth year of Alexander, or 323 B. C., the year in which he died, shows that the first of Simanu was June 13.

As to the people who will be benefited directly by this study, the authors say, "While our tables are intended primarily for historians, both classical and oriental, Biblical students also should find them useful, as any Biblical date of this period given in the Babylonian Calendar can be translated by our tables" (VII). In expressing our appreciation to the authors for this splendid exhibition of painstaking and fruitful scholarship we ought to mention that Dr. W. H. Dubberstein is a graduate of Concordia Seminary and a member of our Church.

W. ARNDT

Christian Education and the Local Church—History—Principles—Practice. By James De Forest Murch. The Standard Publishing Co., Cincinnati, O. 416 pages, 5×8. Price, \$2.50.

It has been stated elsewhere that every pastor owes it to himself and to his people to read at least one good book on teaching every year, in order not to get into a rut in his educational words and works. The book before us will serve the purpose for the present year, especially if it is used with some caution. The author is clearly a Fundamentalist, who adheres to the fact of Scriptural inspiration, even though a few

inaccuracies have slipped into the presentation here and there. Thus the Old Testament, as completed about 458 B. C., was not merely "very similar in content to the Old Testament as we have it today" (p. 25), but identical with it, apart from a few copyists' errors. Luther's promotion to the chair of divinity at the University of Wittenberg was not due to his proficiency in Hebrew and Greek (p. 66), for it was only later that he acquired a good working knowledge of the original languages of the Bible. Luther's translation of the New Testament and of a large part of the Old Testament antedated his issuance of his "Larger Catechism" by a number of years, and not vice versa (p. 66). The section on the *Logos* (p. 103) is lacking in clarity. Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, did not only "make it possible for man to be redeemed from sin" (p. 116), but actually wrought this redemption, for objective justification is a fact. The vicarious atonement is not brought out with sufficient emphasis in the author's discussion of the Christ-centered theory (p. 139). With regard to the Sacraments the author stresses the "symbolic meaning" (p. 183), instead of the sacramental value. — On the other hand, we could fill pages with extracts from the book, since its three parts, in a total of 35 chapters, offer an astounding amount of excellent material which the conscientious pastor may well study in the interest of improving his teaching, both in and out of the pulpit.

P. E. KRETZMANN

The Art of Preaching. By Arthur Allen. Published by Philosophical Library, New York. 93 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.75.

Any preacher who reads this small book will not regret having done so. To the question, What shall the preacher preach? the author answers, "What the preacher has to preach may be summed up in four words, 'Christ and Him crucified.' It is the spiritual magnetism of the uplifted Christ which draws all men unto Him. All preaching should circle round the two most sacred spots in the whole world, Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary, and it should be mainly concerned with the two greatest of all themes, Sin and Salvation—sin because man has broken the laws of Sinai, and salvation through the atoning sacrifice that was offered on the cross of Calvary" (p. 40). The author stresses the preaching of doctrinal sermons. He says, "Doctrinal sermons are sermons which explain the great truths on which the Christian religion is founded. They are therefore of the utmost value and importance. Every Christian ought to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him. He cannot worship intelligently unless he knows what he believes and why he believes it" (p. 68). The author gives much other good advice in reference to the preparation for preaching, the minister's health, his voice, delivery, treatment of the text, illustrations, the congregation, the structure of the sermon, and the preacher himself. A few statements we cannot approve, as, for instance, "St. Paul's experience on the way to Damascus may have been a vision rather than a reality. Why debate about it? The all-important thing to notice is that on that day Paul's whole life was changed. From being a persecutor of the Christians, he became the greatest preacher of Christianity the world has ever known" (p. 39). According to the divine record we must take

Paul's experience to have been, not visionary, but real. However, as before said, our preachers will find this book to be a real stimulus toward better preaching. We are sorry to add that the price for this small book seems to be too high.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Religion in Illness and Health. By Carroll A. Wise. Published by Harper & Brothers, New York. 279 pages, 5¼×8½. Price \$2.50.

Like most modern books dealing with the relation of psychiatry and religion, this volume also supplies many worth-while and valuable suggestions as to the treatment of certain types of ailments which have their root in disturbances of a psychopathic nature. The religious stand of the author, however, is in positive negation and opposition to Biblical Christianity. While he praises the religion of Jesus quite frequently, he does not know that religion. One quotation will suffice. We read, "Christ is not only a symbol for identification, but also one for idealization. Christianity teaches persons not only to be like Christ, but to love Christ. Indeed, it has made love of Christ basic, in the belief that love is the only basis for identification. But it can be readily seen that it is easy to overdo the process of idealization and create a meaning for religious symbols that carries one dangerously away from reality. Some concepts of the divinity of Christ tend to do this. The doctrine of the virgin birth could have credence in a modern mind only through an exaggeration of the idealizing process. The idealizing process may furnish powerful motivation toward an ideal, but the critical faculties of the personality must be permitted to function in their proper manner if balance is to be maintained. This means first an inner adjustment that reduces the need for an exaggerated form of idealization that throttles the reason" (p. 239).

That is a complete and radical subversion of the faith of Christianity which for nineteen centuries has confessed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." This coarse rationalization of the Christian religion pervades the entire work, constantly vitiates its judgments and views, and detracts very seriously from what value the book may otherwise have.

TH. LAETSCH

Concordia Bible Student. Vol. XXXII, No. 2. April, 1943. Topic of the Quarter: *The Epistles of Peter*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 50 cents per annum.

Concordia Bible Teacher. Vol. IV, No. 2. April, 1943. Topic of the Quarter: *The Epistles of Peter*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 75 cents per annum.

The *Concordia Bible Teacher* is edited by Rev. A. C. Mueller under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. This particular issue of the *Bible Teacher* is prepared by Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, S. T. D. The *Concordia Bible Student* is published under the same editorial guidance and the same auspices, and this particular issue is likewise prepared by Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling. These are worthy productions, to which we

gladly draw the attention of our pastors, teachers, and interested laymen. Not only is the material that is offered doctrinally sound, but it is presented in a helpful and easily comprehended form, so that those readers, too, who are not theologically trained, can find their way about in it without difficulty. The *Bible Student* issue is carefully divided into lessons, each one having an appropriate caption denoting the chief contents of the section of Peter's writing that is treated. Appended to the lesson are topics for study and discussion and suggestions showing how the lesson may be learned "through the week." The *Bible Teacher* is an accompanying pamphlet treating the same material from the point of view of the teacher, giving a prayer which may be read at the beginning of the class session and submitting hints on "aim, approach, presentation, and discussion." The topics for study and discussion contained in the *Bible Student* are enlarged on in the *Bible Teacher*, and the leader of the class is thus equipped to offer profitable comments. The whole undertaking deserves receiving the hearty support of all of us.

W. ARNDT

Southern Nebraska District Messenger. Synodical Report of the Southern Nebraska District, 1942. Published by Mr. K. G. Ehlers, Garland, Nebr. 84 pages, 5¾×9.

The paper on "Rights and Duties of the Spiritual Priesthood," read by Prof. Paul F. Koehneke, was largely based on an essay presented by Dr. Stoeckhardt at the meeting of the Iowa District in 1883. This subject is always timely. The District adopted the report of the Committee on Executive Offices, which recommended not to create a full-time stewardship secretary, but to permit the present Stewardship Committee to continue to function. A very instructive report of Committee I on Executive Offices outlines in detail the need, the duties, the objects of the office of an executive secretary of Christian education; the term of office; the financing of this office, etc. Such an executive secretary is to be called jointly by the Northern and Southern Nebraska Districts, provided both Districts concur.

TH. LAETSCH

Philosophy for the Millions. By J. A. McWilliams, S. J. 206 pages. The Macmillan Company. Price, \$2.00.

The author is professor of theology in St. Louis University and has written a number of textbooks in the Thomist tradition. In his present work, intended for a more general public, he sets forth the fundamental ideas of the same system—reason by its ability to discover the law of causality in nature compels the assumption of an infinite uncreated Being; it is the province and ability of the intellect to find what is morally good; and because of his rational nature man must necessarily, by an inner compulsion, seek what is good and may by obedience to the imperatives of reason attain to moral goodness. This system of thought definitely excludes materialism and the book is devoted largely to the argument against a mechanistic philosophy, which declares that man is necessitated in everything he does. In vindicating free will, especially the scheme of John Dewey is tested and found wanting. "Human nature can never be deluded into believing that truth changes

from day to day and that we have outgrown religion." The Roman Catholic position on the nature of the will is maintained throughout, and freedom is defined as "acting from motives that you make your own by embracing them of your own free choice." This is the extreme voluntarist position. Even aside from any theological implications, it involves the sophism that the will may be in a state of equilibrium during which the ego (as an entity separate from and evidently superior to the will) decides which motive the will shall act upon as the stronger. But the assumption of a free will is inseparable from the rest of the argument, which has a pretty strong infusion of semipelagianism ("Everybody does thousands of morally good acts," and man's own final happiness "results from them," p. 43. "Love of God and of our fellow men merits heaven," p. 151). The book has the advantage of presenting clear definitions of all the more important concepts involved, as when religion is defined as "internal and external acts which are, and are intended to be, a reverent acknowledgment of the Supreme Being to whom ultimately we owe our life and on whom we depend for the final fulfillment of that life" (p. 124). Or when the State is defined as "a permanent civic organization formed and maintained at the behest of the natural law for the purpose of protecting man's natural rights, supplying his needs, and providing opportunity for his personal and social betterment" (p. 74). Most of the argument against the agnostic and materialistic position is cogent and is stated with great force, though at times we run into such paralogsms as this (*italics our own*): "If a man says he will practice other virtues but will have nothing to do with religion, it is not only a question of offending God; he is offending against *his reason*. He is in fact altogether rejecting *his reason*, rejecting the one thing which distinguishes him from the brute animal" (p. 127). Or when it is reasoned that "if a thing is dependent, then there must be a God on whom it depends" (p. 140). As to errors in fact, there is the minor slip which attributes to Cabanis a statement from Vogt's *Physiologische Briefe* (p. 111). Father McWilliams does an injustice to the Reformation by asserting that it established authority in an "inner personal feeling" while Catholicism is based on "a rational conviction founded on objective fact and perennial truth." TH. GRAEBNER

To Our Subscribers

It has been our custom to retain the names of our subscribers on our lists for two numbers after the subscription has expired, so that the subscriptions could be continued without interruption in case a renewal came in late. We were very happy to follow this plan at extra expense, but we are now unable to continue this policy because of present conditions.

Our Government has insisted that we reduce consumption of paper and eliminate all possible waste. Because of the restriction in the use of paper it will become necessary to discontinue subscriptions to all of our periodicals with the last number paid for under the subscription agreement. We shall, however, continue our policy of reminding our subscribers of the expiration of the subscription by inserting the usual number of notices in the second last and the last numbers of the periodicals they receive. It is our sincere hope that our subscribers will co-operate with us and the Government by renewing their subscriptions promptly upon receipt of the first notice.

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