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## Book Review. - Literatur

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## Book Review

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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 18, Mo.

**Ruth — the Romance of Redemption.** By J. Vernon McGee, Th. D. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids. 195 pages, 5½×7¾. \$1.50.

This is one of the many books interpreting the Holy Scriptures along dispensational and typical lines, a method quite in vogue with the Fundamentalists of our day. The author is of the opinion that "a full treatment of the theme of redemption necessitates a careful consideration of the Book of Ruth" (p.15). He laments the fact that this has been neglected by many of the reputable writers on the theme of redemption. "As a result of this method of writing, redemption has come to mean a cold business transaction, devoid of the personal element. God did not buy man in the slave market of sin as a chattel is bought and sold. . . . The book of Ruth declares that redemption is not a business transaction but a love affair. The personal element must not be withdrawn from the doctrine of redemption, or the most vital part will be sacrificed" (pp.15,16). The dispensational purpose of the Book of Ruth is treated in a short chapter, where it is presented as an aspect of this book which bulks large to many Bible students. "Elimelech's family pictures Israel of today absent from the land of Canaan and scattered throughout the world, while the Gentile girl is brought into the place of blessing during this interval." But "someday the Church will be united to One who is greater than Boaz. In that day the Jew will return to the Land of Promise." (P.23.)

No less than five chapters are devoted to the typical interpretation of the book. "There are five facts concerning the person of the redeemer which must be true, or else he cannot qualify as a legitimate redeemer under God's program: 1. The redeemer must be a near kinsman. 2. The redeemer must perform in willingness his work of redemption. 3. The redeemer must possess the ability to redeem. 4. The redeemer must be free himself. 5. The redeemer must have the price of redemption.—Boaz met all of these qualifications in the case concerning Ruth. He is but a type, and Christ is the antitype. All of these find their final and complete fulfillment in Christ. In His humanity, He met the first two qualifications. In His deity, He fulfilled the next two requirements. As the God-Man, He met the final qualification. We shall examine each one of these requirements in a separate chapter." (P.122.) We must warn against this mode of interpretation which makes one's own conception of a Scripture passage essential to the correct understanding of the doctrine of redemption. While the Bible presents to us types of our Lord and Savior, such as Melchizedek, Ps.110; Jonah, Matt.12:40; we should nevertheless be very careful in establishing types and basing any doctrine on such types unless God's Word states distinctly that these men are types of the coming Messiah and wherein their typical signifi-



cance consists. Basing any doctrine or the importance of any teaching on a type which is not clearly designated as such by the Lord Himself opens the door wide to human fancies and speculations and undermines the assurance of faith, which must be based on clear Scripture in order to stand the test of trials and temptations.

We note that Keil is throughout the book spelled Kiel.

THEO. LAETSCH

**Messages on Philippians.** By Walter L. Wilson, M. D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 43 pages, 5×8. 35 cents.

This is not a commentary or an exposition in the usual form, but a series of meditations on the significant thoughts presented by the Apostle in the Epistle of Joy. The author, evidently a well-informed lay Christian, presents discussions of the following points: The Purpose of the Book; Unity in Christ; Fellowship in Christ; Rejoicing in Christ; The Humility of Christ; Christ Exalted; Expectation from Christ; Paul's Personal Testimony; Christ, Our Example. Pastors working through Philippians in their Bible classes will find much excellent material in the line of fine applications for such work.

P. E. KRETZMANN

**Short Stories by Jesus.** By William Dallmann. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 219 pages, 5½×7¾. \$1.25.

The man of God, a pastor in particular, constantly dips into Scripture and finds things new and old (Matt. 13:52). In *Short Stories by Jesus* Dr. Dallmann takes the reader over familiar ground and gives him a real treat. Under the guidance of the author the parables pulsate with life. Virile, picturesque words, crisp sentences, unforgettable contrasts, many choice poetic quotations and numerous illustrations drive thoughts home and make them linger in the memory. The thirty six chapters of the book are not only a stimulus to restudy these words of Jesus, but they also offer the pastor valuable material he can use in sermons. The volume ought to find a place on all the desks of our pastors. Since the print is large and well spaced, and the average length of a chapter only six pages, the book may be used for daily devotional reading.—Through an oversight, perhaps, the Bible passage Matt. 20:1-16 is not cited on page 173.

A. W. C. GUEBERT

**Crucial Questions.** By W. M. Robertson, Pastor, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Vancouver, B. C., Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 116 pages, 5×7. \$1.25.

What is here offered is, with a few exceptions, sound Scriptural theology. Chapter I shows up the fundamental errors of Modernism. Chapter II shows that the cross of Calvary is the heart of the Christian doctrine; Chapter III ("Must We Jettison Jonah?"), that if the story of Jonah is a fable, Christ did not speak the truth; Chapter IV ("What Is the Gospel?"), that the death of Christ redeemed the world because it was vicarious. Chapter V unmasks the *παῖον ψευδός* of modern theology, the notion that the Christian experience is the source of Christian theology. Chapter V ("Where Do We Go from Here?") takes issue with a certain writer who asserted that "saints do not go to heaven when they die and that heaven is not our eternal home." Chapter VI



deals with the vagaries and heresies of Socialism. It is a great pity that our author is not content with refuting the teachings of Socialism with Scripture but must bring forward the teachings of millennialism as an antidote to Socialism. ("Its rule will be manifested Theocracy; its labor will be with fixity of tenure, ease of production and lavish abundance; its length of life will be patriarchal; sword and famine and pestilence will disappear; etc." Page 107.) The question of Chapter VIII: "Is the Great Commission Binding upon the Church Today?" is "denied by the exponents of hyper-Dispensationalism." We are not so much interested in the quarrel between the dispensationalists (with whom our author sides) and the hyper-dispensationalists, but are certainly interested in his enforcing of the Great Commission. Is it binding upon the Church today? Many of us *practically* deny it.

Here are some noteworthy statements: "Why plunge the Church into the fires of controversy over matters of minor importance?" we are asked. "Is not coalition better than conflict when the points in dispute are relatively unimportant? May we not get together on some common principle and unify our forces?" All such reasoning displays a lamentable ignorance of the facts." (P.9.) "Fourteen years ago I was full of these critical objections to the Word of God. . . . In my innocency I expected help from the leading exponents of the Christian faith, but I discovered that the very teaching I had imbibed in my infidel days was propagated under a Christian guise by professors of Theology. The statements you read in Prof. Peake's 'Commentary'—that the Book of Jonah is purely imaginative—I can produce to you in the works of Paine and other infidel writers." (P.44.) "It is because of the doctrine of our faith that we are what we are tonight. . . . Christian life is not started off without the presentation of great truths. It is quite true that Christianity is a life, but it is a life produced in a certain way. These modern teachers would have you believe that you can preach the Gospel without preaching doctrine, and there is a certain amount of sarcasm at the expense of those who go in for doctrinal preaching. What we need, however, is not less theology, but more of the right kind. You cannot preach the Gospel without preaching doctrine, for every phase and feature of the Gospel has been formulated into doctrine. . . . Error in doctrine produces evil in life. . . . Ethics is the logical result in conduct of what we believe. . . . Some of us still believe that Christian truth is a fixed and determinate thing of rare and beautiful quality. Christianity is a life, but how is the life produced? You must lay hold of Christianity as an objective divine revelation if you are to produce life." (P.65 ff.)

TH. ENGELDER

**God-Centered Religion.** An Essay Inspired by Some French and Swiss Protestant Writers. By Paul Traugott Fuhrmann. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 237 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

A few decades ago the theological pendulum in many Calvinistic churches swung from the extreme of theocentricism with its one-sided emphasis of the sovereignty of God to the other extreme of anthropocentricism with its society-centered social gospel. But the anthropocentric religion of Modernism, based very largely on Schleiermacher's



pantheistic mysticism, is a fair-weather religion, and its validity is being seriously questioned in ever-increasing circles. Whither shall the floundering Modernists turn? The author of our book invites them to forsake the theory of "the god within us" and to return to the God of absolute sovereignty as He is portrayed in the writings of Calvin, the "supreme representative of theocentric thought." (P.23.) Throughout his treatise the author places Calvinism in sharp contrast to Modernism. He shows the shallowness of Modernism and offers his readers a fairly comprehensive overview of Calvinism. By training the author is well qualified to undertake this dual task. He received his early theological training at the Waldensian Theological Seminary at Rome and obtained his licentiate in theology at Neuchatel, Switzerland. He is thoroughly acquainted with the recent French studies in Calvin research; no less than 30 works published by French Calvinists since 1920 are mentioned in his bibliography. At the Methodist Drew Seminary the author earned doctorates in history and systematic theology, working under Edwin Lewis, who renounced his Liberalism and now belongs to the Barthian school of thought, as is evident in his *A Philosophy of Christian Revelation*. In the first section Dr. Fuhrmann traces Calvin's theological development according to modern French historians and shows that the sovereignty of God is the central theme in Calvin's system. In the second part of the book the important doctrines concerning revelation, Christ, man, life, faith, etc., are discussed in the light of Calvin's fundamental principle with special reference to the antitheses between Calvinism and Modernism. The author shows, for example, that Modernism attempts to find the ultimate truth through reason, conscience, emotion, nature, or history. Calvinism, however, beginning with the sovereignty of God, finds no point of contact between man and God, and God can therefore be known only by revelation, i. e., "God Himself acting in the heart of man" (p.87), so that man by the Bible and direct illumination comes to a knowledge and a conviction of divine truth. In the section on life (sanctification) the author shows that Modernism answers the question as to the motive for good actions by pointing to society's welfare (anthropocentric); whereas Calvinism points to the glory of God (theocentric). (P. 145 ff.) This theocentric view of Calvin gives to Calvinism its distinguishing characteristic, and the author has succeeded well in presenting Calvinism as the God-centered theology of the "God-intoxicated man." According to Professor Lecerf, a rigorous recently deceased representative of Calvinism, God as the absolute sovereign is the starting point, means, and end of everything for Calvin, and this principle prompts Calvin to systematize all religious thought around this principle and to integrate all areas, whether ecclesiastical, social, economic, cultural, political, or scientific, with his God-centered concept. (P.164 f.) This is the basic difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism. Calvin overstresses the absolute sovereignty of God, while Luther in keeping with Scripture properly stresses the *sola gratia*. While the contrasts between Modernism and Calvinism are treated explicitly, the Lutheran reader will detect the difference between the theocentric theology of Calvin and the Christocentric approach of Luther.—Our author presents the modern Calvin scholars' view as to



the difference between Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin concerning the Lord's Supper, namely, Luther's consubstantiation (?) leads to pantheism, Zwingli's theory that sacraments have only mnemonic value leads to deism, but Calvin's doctrine "distinguishes God from all else, yet does not separate them; it unites God and His creation without confusing them. . . . Yet God's sovereignty must always be preserved. The operation of God and that of the sign must be distinguished: the sign manifests, Divine Reality alone accomplishes." (Pp. 168—172.) While, on the whole, the author is true to his promise to present classical Calvinism and not Neo-Calvinism or Barthianism, we believe that the section on inspiration (p. 85) reveals Barthian influence, especially when it is stated that no statement can be adduced from Calvin's writing in favor of literal inspiration. What about the Institutes IV, 8, 6, 9 or I, 6, 3?

F. E. MAYER

**The Gospel of the Grace of God.** By J. Clyde Turner. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 165 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.00.

**Wonderful Jesus.** By Charles Ludwig. The Warner Press, Anderson, Tenn. 127 pages, 5¼×7¼. Price, \$1.00.

These two collections of sermons show the praiseworthy emphasis by many present-day Fundamentalists on the central teachings of Christianity. The first is the work of an elderly Baptist minister (Greensboro, N. C.), a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who has served his Church as pastor and in many other capacities for over thirty-seven years. Dr. Turner preached the annual sermon at the meeting of the Southern Baptist convention at Birmingham, Ala., in May, 1940, and it was suggested to him that he expand his discourse into a series. As a result we have in this book thirteen sermons on the cardinal Bible doctrine of divine grace, treated under such heads as: "The Riches of Grace," "Saving Grace," "Abounding Grace," "Transforming Grace," "Sustaining Grace," "Prevenient Grace" (preparatory grace), "Providential Grace." The sermons are deeply doctrinal and dignified, abound in timely applications to the needs of believers, and show thorough study and a scholarly grasp of theological essentials. The reviewer was favorably impressed with both the approach and the content of the addresses. The author (a Baptist) differs at times in his viewpoints from Lutheran theology. Instead of acknowledging the Gospel as a means of grace, he merely says that "the riches of God's grace are revealed and affirmed in the message of the Gospel" (p. 29), which is inadequate since divine grace is actually offered and conveyed through the Gospel. Furthermore, the statement "faith is the condition of salvation" may be rightly understood; but when the writer, while emphasizing the *sola gratia* in general, declares that faith is "the condition on which God bestows His free gift" (p. 40), he speaks in terms of Arminianism, especially as he approvingly quotes Dr. Robertson's statement in this connection: "Grace is God's part, faith is ours" (p. 41). The whole presentation, to say the least, is lacking in clarity. We may also warn our readers against the definition of faith (used occasionally also in Lutheran circles) as being "acceptance of divine grace and surrender" (p. 41). When a person believingly accepts Christ, he, of



course, surrenders himself to Christ; but to make such self-surrender an essential part of conversion in the way in which this is done in Reformed circles, means to mingle sanctification into justification. Faith as acceptance of Christ's merits is always complete, but surrender in the sense of obedience to Christ (and that is the meaning in which it is commonly used) is a fruit of faith and is never complete in this life. Ultimately, if faith were essentially self-surrender, no person could be saved since in that case salvation would be conditioned on his good works. Also the Reformed "surrender" doctrine has an Arminianistic background. In spite of these and other faults, however, the reviewer has read these sermons with much pleasure and profit.

"Wonderful Jesus" is a collection of addresses by a young Baptist pastor, the son of a missionary in Africa, where he spent the greater part of his childhood. After finishing his theological studies in America, he held evangelistic and missionary services, until he was called into the ministry. In a strongly evangelistic manner his sermons extol Jesus as the only Savior of lost mankind, treating such subjects as: "The Stranger of Galilee," "Christ at the Door," "Christ at the Well," "The Weeping Christ." There is much immature theology and inadequate terminology (to say the least) in the sermons, and it is unfortunate that the author so very often by way of illustration draws persons and incidents of the present World War into them. Nevertheless, even though it is more superficial and less scholarly than the first sermon collection, also this one can be studied with some profit. The author is especially appealing when he goes back to his experiences in Africa and contrasts the light of Christianity with the darkness of paganism prevailing there.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

A. T. Robertson. *A Biography*. By Everett Gill. The Macmillan Company, New York. 250 pages, 5½×8¼. Price, \$2.50.

To all students of Professor Robertson's two grammars of New Testament Greek this inspiring and intimate biography of the great American teacher of the Greek Testament will supply hours of delightful and instructive reading. It was composed by Dr. Everett Gill, preacher, lecturer, and writer, a close friend of Dr. Robertson, who was assisted in his task by Mrs. Robertson, one of professor Robertson's daughters, and more than three score of Robertson's former students and friends. *A Brief Autobiography*, of sixty-one pages, begun by Robertson in 1887, and *Recollections of My Early Life*, begun in 1915, provided the biographer with valuable and reliable details. With these helps and helpers Dr. Gill has performed a fine piece of biographical work. Not all chapters may be of equal interest to all readers, but such as "The Theological Professor," "The Preacher," "The Teacher," "The Author," "The 'Big' Grammar," "Home Life," "The Perfect Day," and some others which picture the professor apart from his Baptist associations, will command, we are sure, universal interest. Seven valuable pictures are added, five showing Dr. Robertson in person, either alone or in group gatherings, and two, his beloved birthplace, "Cherbury," and his beautiful Louisville home. The story of Dr. Robertson's work at Louisville, to which his whole life was dedicated, is so intensely absorbing and stimulating that



the reviewer spent on it the greater part of a "free day" and most heartily recommends it to his fellow students of Robertson's valuable grammars. The biography will no doubt arouse new interest in the study of the Greek New Testament and induce students to turn to Robertson's grammars with greater loyalty. As the biography is well written, so also the mechanical equipment of the book is excellent. A few moments' reading will convince the reader that the biography was penned out of sincere love for the task and out of still greater love for the man whose life and work it so nobly pictures.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

**Manual of Sex Education.** By Clayton F. Derstine. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 120 pages, 5½×8. \$1.00.

The author aims to tell the average parent and teacher of children how to tell the story of life to children of various ages. Part I answers the question, Should the Story of Life Be Told? Part II tells how to teach the story to children five to eight years old; Part III, children nine to twelve; Part IV, adolescents thirteen to twenty-five. Part V tells the story for parents and teachers, while Part VI tells why the story was told. The spirit pervading the book is that of Christian chastity. While the author calls attention to the dreadful consequences of unchastity and points out various aids toward leading a chaste life, he stresses throughout the book the need of faith and love of Christ Jesus, in whom we have strength through His atoning sacrifice to strive for, and live, a clean, fresh, wholesome sex life. We recommend the book to our readers.

THEO. LAETSCH

**In Fellowship with the Savior. II.** By P.E. Kretzmann. 32 pages, 3½×6. Price, 15 cents; 2 for 25 cents. Order from the author, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

We are sure that this fine collection of simple Christian verse will be welcomed by many readers. Dr. Kretzmann, our esteemed colleague, is known to many as a gifted writer of consoling, strengthening Christian poetry, and the thirty-two poems offered in this attractive brochure are so timely and appealing that we heartily recommend them to all who love spiritual poetry. The following titles suggest to the reader what the booklet has to offer: "On Christmas Day"; "Thoughts for the New Year"; "A Prayer for Lent"; "Easter Trust"; "A Churchworker's Prayer"; "A Prayer for Strength"; "Meditation in Times of War"; etc. May many buy the booklet and derive much joy, inspiration, and comfort from reading its sweet gems.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

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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.

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