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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 18, Mo.

A Dictionary of Bible Topics. By Th. Graebner, D.D. Editor *The Bible Student, The Annotated New Testament*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 278 pages, 5½×8. \$2.00.

Here is a book which we should like to see read far and wide in our circles and beyond them. It serves well several distinct purposes. First and foremost, it offers valuable information on a number of subjects in which every reader of the Bible is interested, throwing light on matters which are touched on in the sacred text. In the second place, it answers questions which naturally arise when the Bible is read and to which the ordinary Bible student cannot at once give a reply. In the third place, it refutes criticisms which have been advanced against the reliability of the Bible in one or the other passage. The author says in the Introduction, "The book is intended not for the theologian, but for the non-professional student, particularly for the teachers in Sunday schools and other part-time educational agencies of the Church." One objective which the author evidently had, and which he has achieved very well, was to make his chapters readable, interesting, and easily understood.

The material is divided into three sections, which have these headings: I. "Studies in Biblical Interpretation"; II. "Bible Land Rambles"; III. "Biblical Archaeology and History." As examples there might be mentioned for the first group (the titles are selected at random): Septuagint, Origin of the Sexes, the Unpardonable Sin; for the second group: Gibeon, Hebron, the Holy Land; and for the third group: Books in Biblical Times, Chronology of the Old Testament, Chronology of the New Testament. Where *cruces interpretum* are treated, the professional theologian may occasionally prefer a different interpretation. But he will have to admit that the explanation here given does not violate the analogy of faith, that is, the clear doctrinal passages of the Holy Scriptures. We have no doubt that where the book is introduced it will be gladly read, and the result will be, to use the phraseology of the author in the Introduction, "increased love and reverence for the Word of God."

W. ARNDT

Heritage and Destiny. By John A. Mackay. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1943. 109 pages, 5½×7½. Price, \$1.50.

A Preface to Christian Theology. Same author; same publishers, 1943. 187 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$2.00.

These two books offer lectures which Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, delivered before college and seminary students. *Heritage and Destiny* presents lectures given at Lafayette College and Davidson College in 1941 and 1942, and *A Preface to Christian Theology*, a series held at Union Theological Seminary (Virginia) in 1940. The messages in the two books are quite similar in content; only in *A Preface to Christian Theology* Dr. Mackay pictures his project

on a larger canvass and in the light of his theological principles. He pleads for putting God, the Heritage of Israel, into the scheme of all things—into the life of the individual and of the nation and into its whole culture. For Mackay theocracy is a living, vital question facing and challenging the world in its present confusion and perplexity. Unless the human race commits itself to God, it cannot fulfill its destiny in God's world. This is his central theme in *Heritage and Destiny*, which closes with pleas for the acknowledgment of God's lordship, for repentance, for the recognition of the rights of individuals and nations, and for the establishment of an order of justice. In *A Preface to Christian Theology* Mackay, while developing the same "Christian world picture," shows in detail just how God is to be placed into the life of individuals and nations. Beginning with a vivid description of the bankruptcy of rationalistic optimism and the resultant nihilistic philosophy, he shows how out of this terrible chaos totalitarianism in various forms and lands built up pagan ideologies, which must go down in defeat. Fortunately, under the theological leadership of Kirkegaard, Berdyaev, Barth, and Brunner he declares a new interest in positive theology has been aroused in wide circles, and Christian theology (?) is therefore on its way back. The theologian, however, must not employ the balcony (the speculative, academic, scientific) approach, but rather that of the road, that is, of actually facing the challenge of existence. Soeren Kierkegaard's influence "is bringing a renaissance of genuine Christian thinking" (p. 45). And in what does this exist? By "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," the pilgrim on the road is bound to find the truth (p. 54). Two ways are open to him. He may study "God's footprints in nature and culture," but, above all, he must study "the way of the Book," the goal of Biblical truth being "redemption, the participation of man in the life of God" (p. 66). To accomplish this, the wayfarer must "encounter God in the Bible" (p. 67 ff.). "God and man meet in Christ" (p. 71). When depicting "the meeting of the human spirit with God in Christ," Mackay reverently speaks of Christ's atoning death and resurrection and he quotes such central Gospel passages as: "Christ died for our sins," and: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," but he uses and interprets them not in the sense of orthodox Christian theology, but in that of Kierkegaardian experimentalism. Mackay's theology is not that of the Hodges and of Warfield. He does not speak of repentance and faith in the sense of traditional Christianity. He substitutes for these "the encounter of the human spirit with Jesus Christ, the Truth," which certainly does not mean Biblical repentance. But to proceed. The human spirit having "encountered Christ," "gives birth to a special quality of personal life and to a particular form of corporate living" (p. 81). The spirit of man, having encountered the Truth, gains "the Christian view of history," which means that "in Jesus of Nazareth the world of God broke into the temporal order" (p. 94). By way of illustration the author describes his own encounter with the "Cosmic Christ" (p. 97), who, after this, became "the passion of my life" (p. 97). Now, of such as have encountered Christ consists the "new community" (p. 96), or "God's kingdom," or "the Church," "the highest expression of the meaning of goodness and at the same time the

supreme organ for the achievement of goodness in the world" (p.159). Just how the Church is to exercise itself in the interest of goodness and truth is described in detail in the final chapter, "The Church and the Secular Order," in which Mackay explains its various functions—prophetic, regenerative, and communal. Here he returns to his favorite idea of a theocracy in which individual and national rights are guaranteed to all men and the virtues of truth and goodness find constant application and exercise. Dr. Mackay is a popular writer. His style is fascinating and the presentation of his fundamental theological tenets not too difficult. As he uses the terminology of Christian tradition, he no doubt will be regarded by many readers as a representative of orthodox Christianity. But his theological system is lacking in the clear conception of the meaning of Law and Gospel, of sin and grace, of regeneration and sanctification, as these have been set forth and defended by the orthodox Princeton dogmatists. To Mackay "grace" is God's approach to man for his redemption, "in which all the resources of Deity are made available to man" (p. 71). Divine grace, therefore, does not mean to Mackay what it meant to Augustine and Luther. "Faith" to Mackay is the "human response" to grace, which is the "divine initiative" (*ibid.*). To Mackay, Christ is the Truth inasmuch as faith in Him is the gateway to "a knowledge of the ultimate meaning of life" (*ibid.*). He therefore loses sight of the *salus aeterna*. The departure of Mackay from orthodox Calvinistic theology is thus apparent. He writes interestingly and well on vital subjects that deserve study by all. But what he sets forth is not the way of life as this is presented in Scripture and the Christian Creeds. It is a Barthian philosophy of religion.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Coming Tribulation. By Cecil J. Lowry, Ph.D., D.D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 114 pages, 5×8. 45 cents in paper.

The title of this booklet is misleading. Pages 1—75 treat of the Flood. Here a good deal of valuable apologetic material is offered. The denial of the Flood is characterized thus: "There was a time when the Protestant clergy looked upon David Hume's natural philosophy—a denial of the miraculous—and Ingersoll's brazen blasphemy with scorn and contempt, but now a surprising number are altogether silent on the issue, while others have become fellow travelers, striking the word 'miracle' or 'supernatural' from their vocabularies. . . . They treat Noah's Flood . . . as a joke." Pages 87—114 treat of "The Coming World Government, Antichrist, and the Coming Tribulation," and present a medley of chiliastic fancies. "There is under way in America a strong movement to create a World Government at the close of the war with our nation as an integral but dependent part. . . . Students conversant with subversive forces are well aware of the fact that a World Government is in the offing—that there is an international conspiracy against the Church and Christian nations. Students of prophecy are agreed upon the fact of a World Capital, but they do not know whether it will be Rome, Babylon, Moscow, or Jerusalem. The great warlord, known in Revelation as the *Beast*, or *Antichrist*, will conquer the world. For three and one-half years his rule will be universal. . . . He will govern

commerce, labor, buying and selling, industry, propaganda, and worship. . . . The dreadfulness of that day of the *Great Tribulation* is described Jer. 4:23-29; 25:31-35; Rev. 16:1-21; 19:17, 18. The way by which Christ's Church will escape the Tribulation is known as the *Rapture*. . . . They will sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the air. After the supper the glorified Church shall arise and mount their white horses to follow their Captain who, riding on a white horse, leads from the sky to Armageddon. When the battle closes, He will establish His throne in this present earth for a thousand years—the Millennium. We shall reign with Him upon thrones during that Golden Age." TH. ENGELDER

The Path to Perfection. By W. E. Sangster, M. A., Ph. D. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 214 pages, 9×5½. \$2.00.

The study of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification is of practical value, because the modern Holiness bodies rightly claim to be the spiritual heirs of Wesley. The author, the pastor of Central Hall, Westminster, London, examines Wesley's doctrine on the basis of John Wesley's sermons and Charles Wesley's hymns. He attempts, first of all, to define Wesley's doctrine, an extremely difficult, yes, well-nigh impossible task, because Wesley himself does not clearly and precisely set forth his views concerning entire sanctification. He himself wavers between calling it entire sanctification; perfect love; complete eradication of sin, on the one hand, and a moment-by-moment growth, a gradual attainment, on the other. The difficulty in defining Wesley's central doctrine becomes especially acute when one endeavors to scrutinize Wesley's interpretation of his favorite passages, his theological presuppositions, and especially his concept of sin. All perfectionists define sin in such a way that perfection is not beyond the reach of sinful man. Perfectionism cannot flourish where the doctrine of original and actual sin is correctly taught. But if sin is defined as a voluntary transgression of a known law, as Wesley does, then the perfectionist will find room for his doctrine of perfection as "indwelling love, banishing all conscious sin, received by faith in an instant, and maintained from moment to moment by humble dependence upon God."

The author subjects Wesley's doctrine also to a psychological analysis, especially the idea that sin is eradicable. While this analysis may prove helpful in dealing with the Holiness bodies, it does not fully satisfy the Lutheran theologian. Dr. Sangster's book will prove stimulating and interesting. However, the reader must keep in mind that the author fails to place sanctification in the proper relation to justification. This is especially apparent in the section where the author condemns the failure of the Christian church at large to live up to the standard which is rightly expected of Christians.

F. E. MAYER

The Lutheran Church under American Influence. By Paul W. Spaude. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 435 pages, 6×9. \$3.50.

Every Lutheran pastor as well as a good many laymen of the Lutheran Church who are interested in the blessings which God has bestowed upon the Church of the Lutheran Confession in this country ought to be very grateful to the author for this scholarly monograph. For

it is truly, as the subtitle states "a historico-philosophical interpretation of the Church in its relation to various modifying forces in the United States." The remarks of the Preface indicate that "the monograph which is herewith offered to Lutherans and others in America not only presents the background of European Lutheranism and of specific Lutheran movements in Europe, but goes into a detailed discussion of the various factors which influenced the Lutheran Church in America as a whole and certain branches of the Lutheran Church in particular." The monograph presents a very painstaking, one may say, an exhaustive amount of research. Part I presents, in seven sections, the background of Lutheranism in Europe. Part II offers thirteen chapters on American Lutheranism. It is a good thing that these chapters are written from the standpoint of conservative Lutheranism and that the author approaches his subject throughout with candor and courage. He discusses the influence of American democracy, of the American industrial organization, of the Sunday school, of American secret societies, of American universities, of modern financial organization, of the modern social gospel, of evolutionism, of Reformed Protestantism (under the separate headings of Puritanism, unionism, union movements, rationalism, and revivalism). When speaking of lodgery and unionism, the author does not mince words, but pictures the trend toward denominational fusion with all its dangers, always citing examples from history in support of the points made. (Pp. 305 ff.) In describing the consequences of unionistic practices (p. 319 ff.) it is definitely shown that they endanger true church life and enfeeble Lutheran consciousness. One of the finest sections of the book is that which combats evolutionism, showing clearly that it destroys the inviolability of Scriptures. An interesting statement appears on page 252, where the author, in referring to the China Mission work of the Missouri Synod, states: "Here, the conservative Missouri Synod has shown signs of weakening, leaning toward 'theistic' evolutionism." We are wondering whether the author's references on this point are not, after all, somewhat tendencious. P. E. KRETZMANN

The Approach to the Unchurched. By Pastor Philip Lange. Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 70 pages, 7½×5. 35 cents.

When recently in my homiletical class I was treating the preparing "of sermons on the mission work of the Church and also stressing the importance of the personal approach to the individual, a student asked, "Where can we find some material on personal mission work?" That was a proper question. At the time being I directed him to our book on Pastoral Theology, which gives some few such directions. No doubt, some young inexperienced pastors, too, are puzzled at times just how to approach various individuals, for not all cases are alike. Our lay people, I am convinced, would be more inclined to speak to the unchurched if they knew just how to go about it. Pastor Philip Lange has rendered a service to all such by writing his booklet, *The Approach to the Unchurched*. We herewith recommend it. After an introduction he treats the following subjects: Incentives, Qualifications, Equipment, Starting Point, Types of Unchurched, Hindrances, Organization.

J. H. C. FARR

Synodical Report of the Southern Nebraska District, 1943. Published by The Ivy Press. Order from Mr. W. A. Vahl, Lincoln, Nebr.

This report is published as the December, 1943, issue of the *Southern Nebraska District Messenger*. It contains a very interesting and timely essay by Dr. G. V. Schick on "The Rights and Duties of the Christian Citizen" on 28 pages, which well deserved the resolution of the convention that "our congregations be requested to place a copy of the synodical *Proceedings* into every home; and that the members of our congregations be encouraged to read and study the *Proceedings* and, if at all possible, that the essay be studied in groups such as voters' meetings, Bible classes, ladies' aids, and men's clubs" (p. 42). Besides the usual reports of the various committees and boards, the Articles of Incorporation of the District are published together with the regulations for the various officers, boards, commissions, missionaries, and mission congregations (pp. 68-80). The District also resolved "That in grateful remembrance of the divine blessings bestowed upon the congregations of the Missouri Synod in Nebraska and Wyoming during the past 75 years a history of the Southern Nebraska District and its antecedents (1868-1922) be published as soon as feasible in booklet form of convenient size and that each congregation be expected to purchase at least five copies, a copy to be available to the pastor, teacher, and chairman of each of its boards; additional copies to be ordered by congregations in advance of publication; the District to supply the necessary copies for the libraries of Synod's colleges and seminaries" (p. 59).

THEO. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Convention of the Eastern District, 1943. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 42 pages, 5½×8½. 23 cents.

Owing to wartime conditions, the regular meeting of the Eastern District was canceled by permission of the resolution of 1942. The Board of Trustees met with the Visitors and the representatives of the various District Boards, a total of twenty-three men. There was no public worship, no administration of the Sacrament, no essay, and no representation on the part of Synod. The *Proceedings* contain the President's address and the report of the various officials of the District and will interest many of our readers.

THEO. LAETSCH

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Adequacy of Christ in These Days of Separation and Sorrow. By Clarence E. Mason, Jr., D.D. 26 pages, 5¼×7½. 25 cents.

Victory for the Shut-In or the Ministry of the Storm. By David M. Dawson. 27 pages, 5¼×7½. 25 cents.

Soldiers for God and Country. By C. Holtrop. 47 pages, 5¼×7½.

Gongs in the Night. By Mrs. Gordon H. Smith. 102 pages, 5½×8. 50 cents.