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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.

The Glory of Golgotha. Lenten Sermons from the Works of Dr. George Stoeckhardt, Translated by the Rev. William Burhop, and "Passion Story Pictures" by Dr. Louis J. Sieck. Concordia Publishing House. 125 pages. 5¼×7¾. \$1.00.

This book of Lenten sermons is unique in two respects. It is unique inasmuch as it presents sermons of two members of the Concordia Seminary faculty of different periods of time: Dr. George Stoeckhardt, in his day the outstanding professor of exegesis of the St. Louis Seminary faculty, who lectured on Old and New Testament exegesis at the Seminary, beginning in 1879, while he was still pastor of Holy Cross Church, and from 1887 till 1913 as a regular member of the faculty; and Dr. Louis J. Sieck, the present incumbent of the presidential chair of Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, who for thirty-eight years had been pastor of Zion Lutheran Church at St. Louis, first as assistant to the sained Pastor C. F. Obermeyer and, after his death, in full charge of the very large congregation. Dr. Sieck has long been known as a preacher of ability. This book is also unique inasmuch as the Rev. William C. Burhop, pastor of Calvary Lutheran University Church of Madison, Wis., has made Dr. Stoeckhardt of Saxon birth speak English by reproducing in English Dr. Stoeckhardt's pithy German style. The book needs no further recommendation.

J. H. C. FRITZ

The Loci Communes of Philip Melancthon. By C. L. Hill. Meador Publishing Co., Boston. 274 pages, 5½×8. \$3.00.

It is with genuine delight that the reviewer greets this excellent edition of Melancthon's *Loci Communes* with its fine, scholarly translation; for not only does it possess great intrinsic worth, but it is the first time in the history of the Protestant Church of our country that a translation of this forgotten classic has been attempted. And the honor goes to a Negro, who is a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and who by this translation wishes to show his gratitude not only to his beloved Philip Melancthon, but also to the two Lutheran schools, Wittenberg College and Hamma Divinity School, at which he did his college and seminary work. Dr. Charles Leander Hill, formerly dean of Turner Theological Seminary, is now professor of philology, Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Ga. Very painstakingly Dr. Hill prepared himself for his severe task. With a scholarship to study abroad, he went to the University of Berlin for graduate research. He spent (as he tells us) several weeks in intensive research at the Luther House in Wittenberg, Germany, and altogether fourteen years on the study of Melancthon, his work and theology. The translation was done on the basis of Kolde's last edition of Plitt's monumental text, which again was diligently collated with that contained in the well-known *Corpus Reformatorum* as also with Spalatin's German version.

Finally, all these texts and codices were compared with the original manuscript, kept in the Ducal Library of Gotha. Besides the *Loci*, the book contains a helpful preface, a fitting introduction by Dean E. Flack of Hamma Divinity School, a "Critical Estimate of the Character and Influence of Melancthon and of His Contribution to the History of Thought," a "History of the Formation and Character of the *Loci Communes* up to 1521," Melancthon's "Dedicatory Epistle," and a "Bibliographia Melancthoniana," which is both comprehensive and helpful. What the reviewer wishes to see in a new edition (which he hopes will appear soon) would be (besides, perhaps, a re-study of Luther's theology in relation to that of Melancthon) careful proofreading to eliminate a number of errors, a subject index, covering especially the *Loci*, and the translation of all Greek, Latin, and German quotations, since today students are prone to by-pass whatever is not written in English (*pudeat istos*). May all colleges, seminaries, libraries, and as many scholars as possible order copies of this most valuable work, so that a new and revised edition may soon become necessary. Of course, the reader must not expect too much of the *Loci*; for let him bear in mind that the author, though remarkably precocious, was only twenty-four years old when he wrote this first Protestant dogmatic. Melancthon's theological *Ausreifung* took place especially when he was obliged to write the Augsburg Confession and its Apology; a decade of hard study and of almost incessant polemics proved most helpful to the maturing *Praeceptor Germaniae*. What Melancthon, for example, writes on Offense, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other doctrines, is still woefully inadequate. The *Loci* of 1521, however, show that he had by this time fully grasped the central tenet of the Reformation, the *sola fide*, and his confutation of the Pelagianism of Medieval Theology proves how thoroughly he had discarded its outmoded dialectic. On the other hand, already in the *Loci* of 1521 he manifests his natural tendency to philosophize and rationalize as also the beginning of a Protestant renaissance of intermingling *revelatio et ratio*. Melancthon still stands foursquare on Scripture (cf. the vigorous closing paragraph of the *Loci*, in which he declares that "human commentaries on sacred things ought to be shunned as though they were a pest, because the teaching of the Spirit cannot be purely drawn from anything save the Scriptures," p. 267), but he is not the devoted *Schrifttheologe* that Luther was, who in all his teaching of theology went only as far as the declared Word of Scripture and was willing to teach side by side two plainly revealed Scripture doctrines, even though they seemed to contradict each other. Melancthon's endeavor to harmonize divine providence and human responsibility explains his later synergism, though personally he always appealed to divine grace for salvation. Luther's generous praise of the *Loci* must be viewed in the light of his habitual kindness toward his co-laborers, by which he appreciated in all their efforts great merit even though these had serious faults. In his Introduction Dean Flack characterizes Luther as "bold and boisterous" and Melancthon as "quiet, kind, and conciliatory, a man of peace." Upon the whole, this distinction holds, but Luther, too, showed himself wondrously kind and conciliatory in all cases where the Gospel was not at stake, while

Melanchthon, quiet and peaceful though he was in general, often was extremely stubborn toward those who opposed him. Especially in the "Critical Estimate" there occur statements which could be challenged. The translator himself is strongly Melanchthonian (cf. his words: "In Melanchthonianism I see what seems to me to be the true Evangelical tradition of the Gospel," p. 8) and his high regard for the theology of Melanchthon and his evident dislike for the "pure Lutheran tradition" (p. 33) are reflected in many of his judgments, which can hardly be accepted as true (cf. especially the last part of the "Brief Biographical Sketch," pp. 25 ff., where the issues at times are not adequately represented; also the "Critical Estimate," pp. 433 ff., which raises weighty questions requiring more detailed discussion). Over against the theologians which the translator quotes (e. g., Herrlinger, Dorner, Thomasius, Kahnis, Luthardt, Schenkel, and others) we would suggest to him the unbiased study of Dr. F. Bente's scholarly and original research in his "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books" (*Concordia Triglotta*, pp. 1-256; especially pp. 209-228), which presents a far different Luther than church historians commonly picture. But all this does not mean that the translator has not accomplished a great and noble task. The reviewer is sure that scores of students will be thankful to him for having published this classic of the Reformation. Nor does it mean that his introductory articles, on which clearly he has spent much time and energy and which in general evince painstaking and brilliant research, do not contain valuable and reliable information. Dr. Hill's work on behalf of Melanchthon's *Loci* is truly monumental and should encourage Lutheran scholars to wrest from oblivion other great treasures of Lutheran theology that lie buried in the Latin and German of the past.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible. By John D. Davis. Revised and rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 658 pages (exclusive of "table of maps," map index, and 16 maps of Bible lands), 6¾×9½. \$3.50.

Many Bible students no doubt desire frank and unreserved information on this revised edition of *Davis' Bible Dictionary*. The book appeared first in 1898 and was followed by revised editions in 1903, 1911, and 1924. Explaining this new revision, the editor, Dr. H. S. Gehman, professor of Old Testament Literature and chairman of the department of Biblical Literature, Princeton Seminary, and Lecturer in Semitic Languages, Princeton University, writes in the Preface: "So many advances have been made in Biblical studies since the time of Dr. Davis that the book had become thoroughly antiquated in philology, archaeology, the history of the ancient Near East, Biblical geography, and Old and New Testament criticism" (p. V). This is a rather sweeping statement and deserves considerable modification. There is, for example, relatively little new material in the geography and the history of Bible lands, while there is hardly any in the realm of philology. By far the bulk of *Davis' Bible Dictionary* has been retained, and numerous articles have been neither changed nor rewritten. But there is one department in which the reader will notice a considerable change—though not for the better—and

that is in the field of Old and New Testament criticism. Dr. Gehman writes (in the Preface): "He [the editor] has relied upon the best authorities of our time, and his object has been to produce a work which, within his limitations, will be accurate and authoritative in statement and content, and of constructive value for students of the Bible" (p. V). Unfortunately, these "best authorities" belong into the class of "radical higher critics," and the editor's diligent study of their works is reflected in changed attitudes in the very region in which the helpless Bible student is looking for safe and reliable guidance. The higher critic is given a chance to have his say, while eminent believing scholars of great fame, such as Drs. R. D. Wilson, F. Petrie, M. G. Kyle, and others, who testified against higher criticism in its destructive form are simply ignored. The editor, of course, does not entirely disregard the traditional Christian view of the Bible and its books, but everywhere scholars of liberal tendency have the right of way, and among these are men like J. A. Montgomery, G. A. Barton, W. F. Albright, J. H. Breasted, A. T. Olmstead, C. C. Torrey, Millar Burrows, and others. The result is that the Bible student is confused and misled, for the impression made upon him is that after all not conservative Christian belief, but the views of modern unbelieving Bible critics are to count. A few examples will illustrate. Under *Daniel* the editor writes: "Daniel belongs to the late period and could very easily be assigned to the 2d century B.C.," though he admits: "Some excellent modern scholars continue to date the book in the time of Daniel in the 6th century" (p. 129). But why pass by in this connection the valuable work done by Drs. Wilson and W. H. Green in defense of the conservative side? Again, evidently relying on G. A. Barton, a radical higher critic, for his data on Jeroboam (cf. *Religion of Israel*), the editor judges that Jeroboam, in instituting calf worship anew, was "influenced more by the desire to adhere to ancient traditions" (than by downright apostasy) and that the calf, in agreement with the idolatrous patterns of the land, served merely as the throne of the invisible Jehovah, who thus was worshiped as seated on the bull of gold. This is said after he has stated that Jeroboam had been in Egypt and there had probably (no doubt) witnessed the worship of the Apis Bull, which evidently put this idolatrous notion into his mind. Under *Canon* we read: "It may be concluded that the Law was canonized c. 444 B.C.; the Prophets, c. 200 B.C., and the Writings, c. 100 B.C." This view of the higher critics has been successfully countered by Drs. Green and Wilson and proved unfounded in fact and history, but here it is put down as quite probable. Of the last twenty-seven chapters of *Isaiah* the editors write: "The traditional view, which is still held by some scholars, ascribes them to Isaiah, but at the present time the great majority of even conservative critics ascribe them to Deutero-Isaiah; chaps. 40 to 55 to Deutero-Isaiah and chaps. 56 to 66 to Trito-Isaiah" (p. 269). The arguments of Dr. Davis for the unity of the book are then added, but these are followed by statements which suggest the opposite conclusions, and the closing words of Dr. Davis are omitted: "The Church has always believed in predictive prophecy and in the inspiration of Isaiah." The same treatment is accorded the New Testament books. The articles contributed by Drs. G. T. Purves

and B. B. Warfield have been rewritten by Dr. B. M. Metzger, assistant professor of the New Testament at Princeton Seminary, in such a way as to give higher criticism the "go" sign. "Form criticism" and the theory of "Aramaic originals," which Dr. Gehman regards as a "refreshing contribution to New Testament studies," are given considerable attention, while the historic teaching of the Christian Church that the Gospels in Greek are original and authoritative is ignored. The article on the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel, written by Dr. Purves, gave clear and distinct testimony that it was written by John the Apostle, but in the revision this witness is greatly toned down. The absolute certainty which characterized *Davis' Bible Dictionary* is definitely lacking in this revision and there is, in addition, an insertion of liberal doubts with regard to the authorship of the various Bible books which is most regrettable. Thus Dr. Davis' positive insistence on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is wanting; the new article shows a decided change of attitude toward the liberal view. Concessions are made to unbelief which certainly would have been rejected by Dr. Davis. It seems unfair to the reviewer for anyone to revise a Bible dictionary, or any other book for all that, in a spirit foreign to the original and yet have the revision bear the writer's name. In this case the title is indeed new, but the words: "By John W. Davis" will mislead many a Bible student to believe that here is his old, beloved Bible dictionary revised in the spirit of the cherished Bible teacher, while in reality his spirit of faith and devotion to God's Word is no longer there. Let those who are willing to make concessions to Liberalism write a new Bible dictionary, in which they may disseminate their views; but let such eminently helpful and trustworthy works as *Davis' Bible Dictionary* be allowed to continue their blessed mission serving those to whom God's unadulterated truth is still precious. JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Behind Barbed Wires. Among War Prisoners in Germany. By Erik R. Berg. Translated from the Swedish by Oscar N. Olson. Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill. 95 pages, 5½×8½.

At the present time both pastors and members of congregations are much concerned about prisoners of war everywhere and particularly also in Germany. Although the accounts presented in this collection of episodes stop approximately with March, 1943, they may be assumed to present conditions as they obtain to this day. Which means that people of our country and members of our congregations who have relatives in prisoner of war camps in Germany may gain some insight into the life which these unfortunate men are living at the present time. For obvious reasons the descriptions are very general, in most instances making the identification of the respective camps impossible. Yet the author has managed to give his descriptions a touch of real life, with a large amount of pathos, to be sure, but also with encouraging features. It is unfortunate that parts of the story are filled with the idea of a mixture of religions, apparently a concomitant of the work as supervised by the International Y. M. C. A., but this fact does not harm the book as such. All those who wish to get some first-hand information regarding the life and habits of war prisoners in Germany will find this book valuable.

P. E. KRETZMANN