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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 Power of the Keys. The Original Faith of the Lutheran Church Presented in Quotations from Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. By Uuras Saarnivaara, professor of systematic and exegetical theology, Suomi College and Theological Seminary, Hancock, Mich. Brochure, 64 pages. 25 cents. [If ordered by students of seminaries or colleges (10 or more copies) or for free distribution, 10 cents.] Order directly from author; address: Suomi College, Hancock, Mich.

Because of the importance of the subjects treated and also on account of various doctrinal aberrations defended in it, this brief pamphlet deserves perhaps a more lengthy discussion. With great seriousness, and evidently desiring to restore erring Lutherans to pure Lutheranism, as taught by Luther and the Lutheran Confessions (the author believes that "the Lutheran Church [today] has only the crumbs left of the Gospel that Luther proclaimed and that therefore a return to the original faith of our Church is sorely needed," p.62), the writer directs himself (in the main) against externalistic and indifferent despisers of the means of grace as also against sectarian enthusiasts to impress upon them the importance of the fifth and the sixth chief part of Luther's Catechism: Confession, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. He presents the subject matter by first quoting on a given point Luther and the Lutheran Confessions and then putting a number of either-or questions which should move the readers to consider whether or not they are sincere Christians and true Lutherans. The material is discussed under sixteen questions: "What is the Christian Church?" "Where shall we find Christ and His grace?" "What is true repentance?" "To whom should we confess our sins?" "What sins should we confess in private confession?" "What is the value and benefit of private confession?" "What is the Power of the Keys?" "What is the spiritual priesthood of Christians?" "How do we receive the forgiveness of sins?" "How can we appropriate the righteousness of Christ?" "What is the meaning of the laying on of hands?" "Does absolution depend on contrition and should it be pronounced conditionally?" "How are we to believe in the forgiveness of sins?" "Should we use private confession and absolution before going to the Lord's Supper?" "How should the celebration of the Lord's Supper be arranged, and who should be admitted to it?" "Who receives the Lord's Supper worthily?" To these questions there is added a "Conclusion," with the charge that today Lutheranism (not liberal, but orthodox) has apostatized from the doctrine of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions (confession and absolution) and must therefore return to its original pure form. The reviewer, having had correspondence with the author and understanding the background of his problem, hastens to assure his readers that his statements and strictures are well-intentioned, and he urges his fellow ministers to order the

pamphlet and study it thoroughly, especially as the doctrines which Professor Saarnivaara discusses are sorely neglected in some Lutheran circles. For the greater part, the author is right in what he says, and his soul-searching questions are indeed vital in view of the prevailing formalism and indifferentism. But he errs in putting too great stress on private confession (e. g., pp. 17, 20, 23, 52, etc.), just as if it were impossible for a Christian to obtain forgiveness without it. Again, there is too great an emphasis on the absolution pronounced by the pastor (e. g., 26, 34, etc.), as if those who did not receive absolution from the confessor could not have full assurance of the forgiveness of their sins. Moreover, the impression is created as if the Gospel preached by a hypocritical pastor were not valid (p. 32). Then, too, the writer seems to present the spoken Word as if that alone were the channel of God's absolution (p. 37; Baptism and Holy Communion are of course recognized as means of grace). Lastly, it is said that the laying on of hands is not a mere ceremony but a means by which forgiveness (*ex opere operato?*) is imparted (pp. 41, 52). In some cases the language is not sufficiently clear for the reader to determine just what is meant, but there is no doubt an overemphasis on private confession and the pastor's absolution. There are numerous grammatical errors which should be corrected (pp. 23, 46, 50, 60, 61, etc.). Professor Saarnivaara cites for his declarations Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, but often in such a way that the quotations are misleading (e. g., p. 41: "According to the ordinance of God, sins are forgiven through the laying on of hands"). Frequently the following quotations explain and amplify Luther's briefer statements. Upon the whole, the reader will find the pamphlet most interesting, thought-provoking, and instructive; and notwithstanding its faults it deserves a word of commendation for bringing the doctrine of confession and absolution so emphatically before Lutherans for examination and study. JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Our Creed. By J. M. Weidenschilling, M. A., S. T. D. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 35 cents.

The contents of this booklet (136 pages) were originally prepared as a course for the Bible classes in our Church. They appeared in the January, 1942, issue of *Concordia Bible Student*. Our Synodical Board for Parish Education encouraged the author to issue this course on *Our Creed* in book form, as a companion volume to his previous manuals *Our Bible* and *Our Church*, which found favorable reception.

Here we have a manual which pastors can urge their members to purchase for their private indoctrination and which they can use for Bible-study groups and societies in the congregation. L. J. SIECK

Let Not Your Heart be Troubled. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 15 cents.

In an attractive cover we find 16 pages, one of which is dedicatory, the others each captioned by and based on a comforting text, with a brief poem or Scripture lesson in the body of the page. We have not seen any folder to express sympathy and offer comfort to the bereaved which can equal this one. L. J. SIECK

The Church and the Liberal Society. By Emmet John Hughes, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1944. xv + 310 pages. Cloth. \$3.00.

Here is an interesting book. The reader will find it difficult to stop, once he starts reading it. But it is far from light reading. It is a profound philosophy and interpretation of the last 400 years of history. The author seems to be a Catholic, though this is not acknowledged in so many words. However, the interpretation of the great historical figures, events, and trends of the 400 years treated is very definitely Catholic in point of view. But despite the obvious Catholic bias, the book ought to be read and carefully studied by Protestants and Catholics alike. It is written for our age and will help the reader understand the times in which we are living, and it may do even more: it may help to blast that sense of smug complacency so characteristic of the Church and of society at large today.

The book is divided into four major sections: Part I, The Genesis of Liberal Society; Part II, The Making of Liberal Society; Part III, Liberal Society and the Church Militant; Part IV, The Crisis of the West.

In Part I the author discusses the genesis of Liberal Society. Fifty-one pages are devoted to this section. He points out that the instruments were many with which was fashioned the Liberal Society. The pen of Voltaire, the sword of Cromwell, the telescope of Galileo, the "mysticism" of Luther, the logic of Calvin, the optimism of Rousseau, and the realism of Machiavelli all have made their respective contribution. The revolution which was brought about by these divergent factors affected every sphere of society. It gave rise to the modern secular state and modern imperialism, both completely divorced from the religious and ethical influence of the Church. It placed the industrial middle class, the men of business, into positions of power. Movable capital supplanted tenure of land, thus creating what is now known as the capitalistic system. But the most fundamental effect was the change of man's attitude towards God, the universe, and his neighbor. In short, the secular materialistic way of life of the world today is the direct result of this revolution.

Here the Catholic bias of the author is everywhere much in evidence. The Middle Ages appear as the great golden age of the past. The Catholic Church is the great unifying element in that world shedding its benign blessing upon universal Christendom. The discerning student of history will not be disturbed. He will readily admit that there was a bright side to the medieval world and that this period of history had found a solution for many of the political, social, and economic problems which are troubling us today, but he is also familiar with the reverse side of this picture. Darkness, ignorance, religious superstition, a corrupt Church, tyranny and oppression, and countless other evils cast their gloomy shadows over that golden age of the Catholic Church. Mexico and South America and other Catholic countries have enjoyed the benign blessings of the Roman Church for the past 400 years, and surely no one would suggest that conditions in these countries are a solution of the problems which are confronting the western world today.

In Part II the author traces the making of the Liberal Society. Eighty-six pages are devoted to this section.

The Reformation period is the watershed from which descend all the rivers and rivulets which make up the broad sweeping streams of modern liberal society. The new emerging age is an age of science and not of faith. Everything of the past is questioned and placed on trial, and with it even the Christian God and Christian revelation. Science is the arsenal in which the weapons against God and the Church are forged. Beginning with Leonardo, the author follows the development of liberal thought to the great high priests of the new age—Descartes, Hume, Hobbes, Spinoza, the Deists, Voltaire, Adam Smith, and many others—who have made their contribution towards the secularization of the modern world. "As long as there are fools and knaves," wrote Voltaire to Frederick the Great in 1767, "there will be religion. Ours is the most ridiculous, the most absurd, and the most bloody that has ever infected the world. Your majesty will do the human race an eternal service in extirpating this infinite superstition." These men de-natured God and deified nature. They put the torch to the "City of God" to illuminate the "City of Man." And what a utopia this new world would be according to their bombastic promises! "Humanity, which for centuries had been enslaved and degraded by worshiping false gods, would now cut its way through the last crumbling ruins of a dying world into the clean, clear land of the future. A fuller, finer life would reward those who were guided by the light of reason. For political states a strong and productive land would be theirs. For the world of nations, peace and security would come to an age which could have no more wars; for all wars thus far have been either religious or dynastic, and peace would naturally follow when men dispensed with religion and overthrew dynasty."

This section is beautifully done, offers much food for thought, and shows that what we are reaping today was not sown only yesterday. Godless men for centuries have sown the storm, and we are now reaping the whirlwind which is shattering into atoms the utopia these men have built in their vanity. "Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1:21, 22.

Parts III and IV. In the 132 pages devoted to these two sections the author analyzes with keen penetration the period of history which lies between the Congress of Vienna and the Congress of Versailles and the events that followed. He shows what shameless shams and hypocrisy dominated both congresses and with what ruthless disregard for human life and human personality the masters of the new industrial and imperialistic age which followed expanded the "City of Man." New and ever bigger temples were built to the god of mammon. The forms of the old religions survived, but its business was to confine itself strictly to the "religious," to dogmas and liturgies, but not to life. The old Christian ethics were abandoned, and a new simple formula took their place. All is moral which increases production and adds profit to

profits for the faithful of the new creed. The symbol of the Middle Ages had been the cathedral; the symbol of the new and modern age was the factory and the slum. Slums, semislums, superslums, and more slums were the fruits of this new superior faith. And blinded by the external glitter of material success, the poets glorified this age of callous inhumanity to man. Philosophers provided the rationale, and the Church its religious sanction and pious blessings.

But then came 1914 and 1939. Wm. James had cried, "Damn the absolute creeds," and the wise ones of the world had nodded their solemn assent. And then came Hitler and damned them, and the wise ones were surprised and startled and now are walking about dazed and confused among the ruins of the "City of Man" which they have built.

I repeat, here is a book which should not only be read, but carefully studied. Except for the Catholic bias, which is in evidence in places and the halo which is cast over the Middle Ages and over the humanitarian pronouncements of modern popes, this is a great book and a wonderful analysis of the trends of thought and of the events of the last 400 years of human history. There is so much naive and sophomoric prattle in the world of which we are a part that even Christians and Christian leaders are becoming confused. A study of this book, especially if followed by a further study of the extensive and yet carefully selected bibliography provided by the author, may help to bring men back to a more sober evaluation of the false prophets whose blind leadership has brought a blinded world to the brink of its own destruction.

A. M. REHWINKEL

The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible. Edited by G. E. Wright and F. V. Filson. An introductory article by W. F. Albright. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 114 pages, 11×16. \$3.50.

This is the most complete and up-to-date Bible atlas the reviewer has ever seen. It is entirely new, not just a revision of some previous work, and contains values not found in any other Bible atlas. The *Atlas*, for example, contains 33 maps in full color in the latest style, and 2 in black and white. Each map plate is accompanied by detailed explanatory and correlated discussion, carefully worked out and practically oriented. An excellent index to the maps, including a topographical concordance to the Bible, and an equally helpful index to the text make it easy for the reader to find in a very short time any site or any fact stated in the *Atlas*. The book is divided as follows: I. A general survey of Palestine. II—VII. A historical part, covering the period from the beginning of the world to the Patriarchs and thereafter, ending with Judah in Nehemiah's time. VIII. An enlarged section of maps of Palestine with topographical and historical discussions and geographical illustration. XI. A discussion of the various world empires (Assyrian, Persian, Hellenistic, etc.) from ca. 700 B.C. to ca. 275 B.C. XII—XVI. Palestine and the Mediterranean world from the Maccabean Period, ca. 168 B.C. to Constantine, ca. 325 A.D. XVII. A history of Jerusalem from Israelite times to the present day. XVIII. Archaeological excavations in modern Palestine.

Even this comprehensive outline of the contents of the *Atlas* will perhaps not give the reader of this review an adequate conception of the vast amount of time, labor, and scientific research that went into the making of this outstanding modern Bible atlas, which on account of its excellent maps, illustrations, and its valuable historical, scientific, archaeological, and topographical information merits a place in the library of every pastor and teacher. As a reference work in school libraries it is invaluable. Unfortunately, so far as the believing Bible student is concerned, the *Atlas* contains many views and statements to which he cannot agree. In a general way, it is oriented to modern scientific (evolutionistic) bias. The "Chronological Outline of Ancient History," for example, reckons with the Stone Age, which began some 200,000 to 500,000 years ago (p.15). The user of the *Atlas* who knows how to reckon with the objectionable view of destructive Bible critics and is able to separate the wheat from the chaff will nevertheless not regret having purchased the book. The excellent maps, illustrations, and the many pages of reliable geographical and historical material will richly repay him for the disappointment he experiences in finding reason pitted against revelation in this otherwise fine book; and besides, he will learn from it what really unbelieving scientists believe regarding the Bible, and that upon no substantial proof whatever. Despite its serious faults, the reviewer recommends this new and in many ways helpful atlas to his brethren in the preaching and the teaching ministry for judicious study. The mechanical make-up of the *Atlas* is in every way excellent.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.:

We Walk by Faith. Daily Devotions from Easter Monday to Pentecost. No. 60. By Chaplain Alfred P. Klausler. 62 pages. Price: 5 cents per copy, postpaid; 48 cents per dozen, postage extra; \$3.00 per hundred, postage extra.

Der Auferstandene und die Seinen. Kurze Andachten fuer die Zeit vom Ostermontag bis zum 20. Mai 1945. Rev. George A. Naumann. Price, same as above.

Concordia Bible Teacher, Volume VI, Number 2, April, 1945. Topic: "The Christian and His Country." 128 pages. 75 cents per annum.

Concordia Bible Student, Volume XXXIV, Number 2, April, 1945. Topic: "The Christian and His Country." 128 pages. 50 cents per annum.

From the Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois:

The Missionary and Anthropology. An introduction to the study of primitive man for missionaries. By Gordon Hedderly Smith, B.D. \$1.50.

