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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.

Christian Denominations. By Rev. Konrad Algermissen. Translated from the German and augmented by Rev. Joseph W. Grundner. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo. v and 1,051 pages, 6×9¼. \$7.50.

This is a study by a Roman Catholic theologian of his own Church, of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and of various Protestant denominations. Nearly one half of the volume is devoted to a historical account of the Roman Catholic Church, an explanation of its government and an exposition of its doctrines. The same aspects of the Orthodox Churches of the East are discussed, with particular emphasis on their liturgies. The Protestant denominations are considered in six sections: Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, the Baptist groups, the revival groups, and the eschatological groups. The concluding part of the work furnishes the key to the author's aim and purpose: "The Reunion of Christendom." Upon discussing the history of reunion of the East with the West and the reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestantism, and within Protestantism itself, the author shows what he considers the road to reunion. Guided by the principle in *necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*, the Mother Church is to welcome her erring children back to her bosom.

The author's purpose explains his attitude. The Mother Church is presented in glorious dress; the errors of her wayward children are gently pointed out and rebuked. The author's efforts richly deserve the *nihil obstat* of the *ensor librorum*. The book breathes a conciliatory spirit. By a judicious selection of Protestant testimony the author seeks to convey the impression of objective scholarship; by freely surrendering untenable positions he contrives to strengthen that impression. A friendly gesture is also made in the direction of modern science and religious liberalism. He readily declares the so-called Donation of Constantine a forgery. This has long ceased to be a startling admission; more impressive is the pronouncement that from Mary "would go forth the One who would crush the head of the serpent" (p. 433). In a footnote (p. 439) the author explains: "The Vulgate has *ipsa* ('she'); the original Hebrew text and likewise the Greek (αὐτή) have 'he.'" For the sections on non-Roman Catholic denominations a good selection of Protestant bibliographies is given in the footnotes. The discussion of the Reformation reveals a more profound understanding of Luther and of his work than one finds in many modern non-Roman Catholic writings and also varies agreeably from many earlier Roman Catholic presentations. Designed to call forth a sympathetic response on the part of religious liberals and of some scientists, but quite in harmony with Roman Catholic theology, is the statement regarding the creation of man: "Whether this formation of the human body took place by instantaneous creation or in the form of a slow evolution from inferior forms, which perhaps required hundreds of thousands of

years, the Bible does not say, nor has the Church passed any doctrinal decision concerning it" (p. 404). Regarding the Church's decisions, the Protestant reader may indeed, in the light of history, wonder at the amazing boldness with which the author maintains the charisma of infallibility attached to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching office in matters of faith and morals.

A few typographical errors and other lapses have unfortunately remained undetected. For example, Richard should be Reinhold Seeberg (p. 280); Julius II should be Julius III (p. 763); Henry IV should be Henry VI (p. 978). Errors like Chystraeus for Chytraeus are less important (p. 885). The publishers are to be commended for their choice of type and paper. Their claim that this work furnishes data that otherwise one might have to search for in a dozen different books may be accepted as a justifiable boast. And even if one should have Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexikon* or an equivalent Protestant work, one would still find this scholarly work very useful.

L. W. SPRZ

The Quest for Holiness. A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Investigation. By Adolf Koeberle, D.D. Translated from the Third German Edition by John C. Mattes, D.D. Second printing under copyright 1936, Harper & Brothers, assigned to Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis. xi and 274 pages, 8½×5¼. \$2.50.

This is the third time that Dr. Koeberle's book is announced and reviewed in this journal. The original edition, *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, published in 1929, was reviewed in Volume I, p. 875. The English translation, prepared by Dr. J. C. Mattes, was announced and reviewed in Volume VIII, p. 74. We subscribe to everything that has been said in the two previous reviews concerning this splendid book on the relation of justification and sanctification. Dr. Koeberle is a conservative Lutheran theologian, though a professor in the Reformed university of Basel. We were informed that Dr. Koeberle accepted the call to Basel on the condition that he would not have to make any concessions to the Reformed theology, either in the classroom or in his church affiliation. The author discusses the heart of Christian doctrine: sin, grace, conversion, means of grace, sanctification. The German title, in our opinion, is more adequate than the English title. The author treats the following topics: Man's Attempts to Sanctify Himself in God's Sight, God's Judgment on Man's Self-Sanctification, Man's Justification Before God Through the Word of Forgiveness, Sanctification as the Work of God in the Life of the Justified Sinner, Sanctification as the Answer of the Justified Sinner, The Significance of Sanctification in the Preservation or Loss of the State of Faith, The Relation of Justification and Sanctification. The American reader must keep in mind that the book was originally written for a German theological audience. In the European theological schools dogmatics is frequently taught from the viewpoint of history of dogma. There is an advantage in this approach to the study of dogmatics, namely, the antitheses bring the correct doctrines into bold relief. There is, however, a disadvantage in this method, since the danger of veering into abstract philosophy and metaphysics is always at hand. While our author reveals his thorough familiarity with history of doc-

trine, he carefully avoids all metaphysical speculations. He draws his material from the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It is this approach which makes the entire book so rich in content. A careful study and re-study of the volume will pay rich dividends, both for the pastor's own spiritual life and for the enrichment of his sermons. In Dr. Engelder's words: "the Lutheran pastor will do well to study this book thoroughly, though discriminately." *Tolle et lege!*

F. E. MAYER

The Papacy Evaluated. By E. G. Behm. Publishing by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis. 171 pages, 5×7. Paper, \$1.25.

It is difficult to write a popular and yet absolutely fair treatise of the beliefs and practices of Catholicism. There are so many contradictions in Roman theology that a sweeping statement on almost any point of doctrine may immediately be challenged by a Roman apologist. We know, for example, that Rome has never revoked its rule that a special permit is required for the reading of the Bible. But we must be prepared for their counterchallenge that Benedict XV in 1920 urged the faithful daily to read the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles. It is true, furthermore, that theory and practice in the Roman Church do not agree; in fact, that frequently the practice is worse than the theory. This is true particularly in regard to practice of saint worship, indulgences, the sacramentals. These considerations confront every author who attempts an evaluation of the Papacy. The author has presented the main tenets of Rome fairly and has succeeded in showing that the papal system is not only unchristian, but anti-Christian. The pamphlet is intended especially for the youth of our Church, the concluding chapter being devoted to Rome's doctrines concerning marriage and mixed marriage in particular.

F. E. MAYER

The Lord's Supper in Protestantism. By Elmer S. Freeman. The Macmillan Co., N. Y. 174 pages, 7½×5¼. \$1.75.

The author of this book is a minister in the Congregational Church, who presents the subject matter from the liberal Reformed viewpoint. One of the objectives of the book, as mentioned by the writer, is the drawing together of the various Protestant churches into closer fellowship through a deeper appreciation of the meaning of the Holy Supper. The records, as the author believes, do not show "completely and definitely" what "Jesus intended to do" when in the upper room He observed a "last sacred kiddush" (p. 19). But the last supper "fairly rapidly crystallized and solidified into the Lord's Supper, a religious ceremony or rite in the practice of the Christian Church" (p. 20). The writer believes that the "influence of the Mystery religions upon the Lord's Supper is considerably overestimated, except possibly in the case of Mithraism, where parallelism is most noticeable" (pp. X, 38 f.). Luther "reformed the Roman Mass largely by abbreviation" (p. X). While rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, "his own doctrine, which he called consubstantiation, differed not materially, in a philosophical or metaphysical sense" (p. 59). "He transformed it [the Lord's Supper] into a self-oblation of the worshiper, mystically identified with Christ, who Himself offers the sacrifice" (p. 59). To contemporary Protestantism, for the greater part, the Lord's

Supper is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace . . . ordained by Christ Himself" (p. 77). It is thus "an act of thanksgiving, a recognition of fellowship, a self-sacrifice, and a sacred mystery" (p. 82). "Among churches without too rigid a doctrine of the ministry, the Lord's Supper is a bridge toward unity, while between these churches and others, holding uncompromising doctrines of the ministry, it is at present a barrier" (p. 96 ff.). These quotations set forth the author's opinions on various important matters and give the reader a fair idea of what the book has to offer. Of the fifteen chapters of the book the first eight treat the Lord's Supper from its historico-dogmatical side, while the last seven deal with practical questions arising in connection with its use. An excellent analysis of the contents of the chapters is given in the forepart of the book, which contains also an extensive bibliography and a helpful index. The chief value of the book lies in its demonstration of the viewpoint which a modern liberal with a Reformed background takes of the Lord's Supper. The suggested orders for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, either privately at home or in church assemblies, follow, upon the whole, traditional orthodox patterns current in denominations of the Reformed faith.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Faith of Our Fathers on Eschatology. By Ira D. Landis. Order from Ira D. Landis, R. 3, Littitz, Pa. 423 pages, 5½×8. \$2.25.

Mr. Landis is an orthodox Mennonite who is active as pastor, Bible teacher, and writer. Reared in the home of a Mennonite bishop, he early in his life was led to the study of theology. Later he enrolled in a Scofield Bible correspondence course and soon discovered that the whole Scofield dispensational scheme is at variance with the Christian faith regarding the second coming of Christ as this is set forth not only in the general creeds of the Church, but also in the specific Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, and other confessions. He has therefore devoted himself to the task of exposing the errors of dispensationalism and of vindicating the Christian truth concerning Christ's second advent as this has always been the official teaching of the historic Christian Church. The amillennialistic reader may not subscribe to every statement or argument in the book, but he will read with much pleasure and profit what the writer has to say on the problem confronting the student of Christ's second coming, the utter impossibility of bare literalism in interpreting the Old Testament, the origin of dispensationalism, Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming*, the pernicious errors of the Scofield Reference Bible, and so forth. The author has read extensively in the field of eschatology, and the numerous footnotes prove that he is well acquainted with the vast literature that has been published for and against dispensationalism. There is so much that is valuable in this excellent new polemic against dispensationalism that we recommend it very warmly to our pastors and other church workers who are troubled with millennialism. We believe that the author is right when he says that "*kingdom and church* are used interchangeably [in the New Testament], except when referring to world and Satan's kingdoms" (p. 188). Very true also is this thesis: "The doctrine of 'Once saved, always saved,' one of the triplets of ultradispensationalism, has led Christians into a complaisance that is appalling" (p. 195).

A very interesting chapter in the book is the one on the "Postponement Theory," in which the writer exposes the many contradictions and follies of dispensational interpretation. In explaining Matthew 24, the author seems to apply vv. 3-35 too narrowly to the destruction of Jerusalem, whereas they include also the destruction of the world, the former being a symbol and foreshadowing of the latter. Certainly what the writer has to say on Matthew 24 is worth careful study, since it contains much important and illuminating information. In short, here is a scholarly and thorough study in eschatology, proving that dispensationalism is a sort of anti-Scriptural Modernism, which not only utterly confuses the Christian student of the Bible, but also endangers his faith.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Prince of the Pulpit. A Pen Picture of Geo. W. Truett at Work. By Joe W. Burton. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 87 pages, 7¾×5¼. \$1.00.

The reading of this book will stimulate the preacher to a greater appreciation of his calling, to better preaching, and to greater zeal to win souls for Christ.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Spurgeon's Lectures to His Students. By David Otis Fuller, D.D. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 422 pages, 7¾×5¼. \$3.50.

There is much that we can learn from Spurgeon concerning the attitude of the preacher toward his work. Spurgeon also has many good suggestions, which a preacher might well heed in the preparation and delivery of his sermons. From these two viewpoints these lectures, delivered at his Pastors' College, make profitable reading. Spurgeon uses good English and has an interesting style. The book treats such subjects as: The Minister's Self-Watch; The Preacher's Private Prayer; Sermons — Their Matter; On the Voice; Attention! The Faculty of Impromptu Speech; To Workers with Slender Apparatus; The Necessity of Ministerial Progress; Open-Air Preaching, a Sketch of Its History and Remarks Thereon; Posture, Action, Gesture; Illustrations in Preaching.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Broadly Speaking. By Andreas Bard. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 72 pages, 7½×5¼. \$1.00.

This is a helpful little apologetic for judicious readers, pointing out by numerous illustrations in nine short chapters the reasonableness of the Christian faith and the unreasonableness of unbelief. The title of the book, while somewhat vague, is nevertheless attractive; it is a phrase much used throughout the book by the author. Short poems precede each chapter, serving as a sort of key to its subject matter. The reader may not subscribe to every statement the writer makes; yet on the whole the book is a fine plea for accepting the Triune God as the true Lord, the Bible as the divine Book of truth, Christ as the only Savior of sinners, and the Christian faith as the directive of man's life. It is packed with illuminating, convincing material which might well be placed into the hands of people troubled with doubt or infidelity. When the author writes: "We can never be satisfied with our faith until we find it reasonable" (p. III), he is treading dangerous ground,

though further exposition shows that he does not attempt to render the Gospel mysteries intelligible to human reason, but merely means to say that Christianity is eminently satisfactory, as demonstrated by the many statements and examples in the book.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Questions That Trouble Christians, By W. A. Poovey. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio. 187 pages, 8×5½. \$1.50.

The title of this book well describes its contents, for it treats the following questions: "Does God Answer Prayer?" "What Is the Unforgivable Sin?" "Why Do Christians Have to Suffer?" "Are Denominational Differences Important?" "What Is Predestination?" "Has Science Undermined the Bible?" "Why Doesn't God Destroy Sin?" "Is Church Membership Necessary?" "Can Only Christians Be Saved?" "Is There Such a Place as Hell?" These weighty questions the author treats exhaustively and with much theological acumen, and, on the whole, his replies are Scripturally sound. At times, however, there is mingled into the discussion a touch of levity which is irreconcilable with its seriousness. At times, too, the writer's verdicts may be questioned as, for example, when he says that neither Holy Rollerism nor Romanism, so far as their worship is concerned, should cause denominational differences. But the book contains also downright wrong statements. When, for instance, it speaks of two Lutheran bodies which had been divided for many years and which later came together to discuss their problems and found that they had been teaching the same thing, only the difference in wording having caused the foolish division, the author is mistaken if he (as the context suggests) refers to the regrettable split between Ohio and Missouri. Again, when he says: "We must learn to cut through the verbiage that has grown up around our articles of faith" (p. 71) and then illustrates his point by representing one party as calling a doctrine *rice*, while the other calls it *oryza sativa*, one using the common English and the other the Latin botanical name, the question may be raised whether or not real differences in doctrine are involved by such deliberate use of different terms. But the author is right when in his final verdict he says that "true unity can be achieved only on the basis of God's Word" (p. 79). Most of the questionable statements are found in the treatise on Predestination. Thus when the writer says that "Predestination is not a particularly important doctrine in Christian theology" (p. 82), or that "it can thus be seen that this doctrine has been the tail wagging the dog, because it never has deserved the attention it has received in the Church" (p. 83), the reader will ask whether the author has fully grasped the significance of the doctrine for the *certitudo salutis*, as presented in Article XI of the Formula of Concord. But absolutely wrong it is when the author, while rejecting the "in view of faith" as taking the emphasis away from the grace of God and placing it upon man (p. 94), nevertheless, writes: "In His wisdom God foresaw the result that would occur when each man would come in contact with the Gospel. He thus knew that Luther would not resist but would allow the Holy Spirit to work in his heart. He saw that Judas would accept for a time and then later harden his heart and turn away despite every effort of God to keep him in the truth. He saw that Cain would refuse even to consider the message of the Gospel. On this basis He was able to predestinate

all mankind" (p. 92f.). What else could that be but the *electio intuitu fidei* based on man's merit of nonresistance? Again, the author explains the mystery involved in the *Cur alii, alii non?* as a psychological one and not as one existing because on this point we have no special revelation. He writes: "There is a mystery about all this, but the mystery does not lie so much with God as with man. It is hard to explain why one man will receive the grace and another in similar circumstances will reject it. That is the great, dark secret of the human heart" (p. 93). This is quite at variance with the simple explanation of the Formula of Concord "*Id nobis non est revelatum*" (Art. XI, 56). The reviewer regrets that these and other *naevi* make it impossible for him to recommend unconditionally this otherwise timely and helpful book, especially since we need a book of this kind just now to place into the hands of our laity.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Moody Press, Chicago 10, Ill.:

The Year of the Tiger. By John Bechtel. 218 pages, 5½×7¾. \$1.50.

The Voice of Thanksgiving. Compiled and edited by the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. 393 songs. 6×8½.

All Out for God. By Walter R. Alexander. 140 pages, 5½×7¾, \$1.50.

From the Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa.:

Power for Peace. By O. Frederick Nolde. 138 pages, 4¾×7¾. \$1.00.

From Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood, N. J.:

Author of Liberty. By Carl McIntire. 5¼×7½, 233 pages. \$2.25.

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

H. A. Ironside. Official biography by E. Schuyler English, Litt. D. 5½×8¾, 276 pages, including index. \$2.50.

From Consolidated Book Publishers, Inc., Chicago, Ill.:

The Words of Jesus. Arranged by Gilbert James Brett, edited by Melbourne I. Feltman. Leather bound; gilt edge; illuminated section. The Sermon on the Mount and eight paintings in color, with an index of the words of Jesus as they apply to everyday-life problems. A beautiful gift book. 291 pages, 5×6½. \$2.95.

From Oxford University Press, New York, N. Y.:

A Small Child's Bible. By Pelagie Doane. Seventy one-page Bible stories, each with a new full-page picture. 142 pages, 7½×10½. \$3.00.

From the Christian Education Press, St. Louis, Mo.:

Song of the Earth. By Fred D. Wentzel. 112 pages, 6×9. \$2.00.

From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Christmas Messages. By George W. Truett. 87 pages, 5½×7¾. \$1.00.