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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 Atoning Christ. By R. R. Caemmerer, Ph. D. Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., Chicago, Ill. 126 pages, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$. \$1.50.

While it may be regretted that this book of sermons did not reach the reviewer during the pre-Lenten season, it is reviewed now to encourage pastors to place it on their bookshelf now. They will find its first part stimulating in their work at this season and its second part preparatory reading for the next Lenten season.

In his preface the author states that he "offers these addresses to his professional readers simply by way of stimulus on the common quest of pleading with men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." This plea should breathe through all true Gospel preaching throughout the entire church year. It flows out to the hearts of the readers in all the sermons in this little volume.

The six sermons of the first series are timely in all seasons. They will be found helpful toward a fresh presentation in evangelistic services and in adult membership classes, as well as in regular services. They bear the common title "In Christ We Have Atonement": first, "The Need for Atonement"; second: "God's Way of Atonement"; third: "The Price of Atonement"; fourth: "The Story of Atonement"; fifth: "The Fruits of Atonement"; and sixth: "The Fullness of Atonement."

The second series includes a sermon each for Good Friday and Easter, in addition to six Lenten sermons on the theme: "Christ the Way on the Way of the Cross": first: "Christ Does God's Will"; second: "Christ Is the Savior"; third: "Christ Is the King of Truth"; fourth: "Christ is Numbered with Criminals"; fifth: "Christ Promises Eternal Life"; sixth: "Christ Fulfills the Scriptures."

The author's ability to personalize his preaching is evident in all his messages. They will bring a blessing to all who read them.

L. J. SIECK

A Guide for Boards of Christian Education in Congregations.

By A. H. Kramer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1946. 16 pages, 5 x 7. 10 cents.

In a survey of the average congregation, the Board of Christian Education is frequently merely a repair crew which works under the symbol of the hammer and the paint brush. Mr. A. H. Kramer of Melrose Park, Ill., principal of Synod's largest parochial school, herewith offers a guide which should be helpful in making the Board an influence to be felt in the life of the congregation. Mr. Kramer in a practical way outlines what such a board should include within its sphere of activity. A check list at the end of the *Guide* is particularly helpful.

Anyone not acquainted with the administration in the Missouri Synod will wonder why the author omitted the entire sphere of youth work. To the members of Synod the omission is obvious, since we still operate our educational program in its dissected parts with a separate Board for Young People. Fortunately many congregations and some of the Districts have organized their edu-

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ational program as a unit. We regret that the *Guide* does not follow this trend.

More would have been appreciated concerning the Board's duties toward encouraging a stronger program of education in the home. It is treated merely as a minor item under "Miscellaneous."

As it is, the *Guide* is a worth-while contribution to help the local boards, which we sincerely recommend. ARTHUR C. REPP

The Mediator. By Emil Brunner. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 624 pages, 9¼×6¼. \$6.00.

The first edition of Professor Emil Brunner's *Der Mittler* appeared in 1927 and received relatively little attention in wider theological circles. In 1932 there was published a second, unaltered edition, from which the present excellent translation into English was made by Miss Olive Wyon, a close student of Brunner's works. It was carefully examined and heartily approved by the author, who himself is at home in English and American theological literature. Many consider *The Mediator* Brunner's most important work not only because he here treats the central doctrine of Christian theology, but because he here applies his fundamental tenet of "Revelation" to the person and office of Christ. Brunner's work is both apologetic and polemical. Against the absolute rejection of the Christian doctrine of the mediatorship of Christ by modern theological radicals, he shows that the Christian Church must by all means hold to this most fundamental of all fundamentals. In fact, he declares in his "Preface to the German Edition," this entire study grew out of his "conflict with modern theology" (p. 16). But the book is no less polemical. With one vehement sweep Brunner brushes aside all substitutes which pseudo-theologians, such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Albert Schweitzer, Troeltsch, and others, have proposed in place of the Christian doctrine of Christ's redemptive work. Brunner goes back to Luther, whom he quotes more than he does any other theologian, as also to Calvin, whom, however, he cites less frequently. In his "Preface to the English Edition" Brunner states that he has only one thing to add to the "Preface to the German Edition," written seven years before, namely, that today he is more convinced than ever that "the world needs nothing so much as the message of Christ, and that the Church needs nothing so urgently as meditation upon this message" (p. 17). In the first chapter of his book, in which he discusses the "distinction between general and special revelation," he says of the many "respectable, good, pious people who do not believe in the Mediator" the following: "I would say all the good I can of them, but here is one thing which I cannot and ought not to say about them: that they are Christians. For to be a Christian means precisely to trust in the Mediator" (p. 40). With all this emphasis in the Christian message of the Mediator and his defense of the terminology of Christian theology, especially of the doctrine of the "Two Natures of Christ," the orthodox Christian believer might expect a truly Christian presentation of the traditional doctrine concerning *Christus Mediator*. But he will find himself sorely disappointed. Brunner acknowledges as correct neither the traditional Christian doctrine of Christ as the Mediator between God and man, nor the modern

liberal view, which discards this doctrine altogether, but only the distinctively Barthian conception of it which, with more or less deviation from his colleague, he defends in his book. To begin with the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. Brunner regards the doctrine of verbal inspiration as directly harmful because it has "materialized the authority of the Scriptures and ruled out the decision of faith" (p. 343). He states with evident satisfaction that "historical criticism has freed us forever from the conception of that unity [of the Scriptures] which was the fruit of the theory of the Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures" (p. 272). He believes that the doctrine of verbal inspiration with the process of producing arguments and proofs based on Scripture, "which is also untenable on general ground," is especially unfortunate when applied to the "idea of the Virgin Birth." This doctrine he regards as untenable as that of Verbal Inspiration. He says: "As an historical account which the Church is supposed to have received from the parents of Jesus, the idea of the Virgin Birth scarcely comes into consideration at all. There is practically no historical evidence at all for the argument that this doctrine is based upon a statement of Jesus" (p. 324). Brunner holds that the doctrine "arose rather late," and that for "dogmatic reasons and not out of historical knowledge" (*ibid.*). In his discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, Brunner rejects very decidedly both Arianism and Sabellianism, but his own doctrine is not that of the *Quicumque* (the Athanasian Creed). On the Trinity he philosophizes: "God manifests Himself to us in revelation as the One who communicates Himself, as Love. Because the communication, the Word, is Himself, therefore in Himself He is One who gives Himself. But that He is the One who communicates Himself we cannot conceive otherwise than through the thought that in Himself . . . He is loving, self-giving. It is this truth which is expressed in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. . . . The Word, the process of self-communication, exists eternally in God Himself. When God reveals His being to the world as One who gives Himself, as Love, this is what He is in Himself, in His very Nature" (p. 280). That is human speculation in the Trinity, not Scripture doctrine. Accepted literally, it means that the three persons in the Godhead are so many processes or essential manifestations of Love. Thus Brunner defends the divinity of Christ, but not on grounds of Scripture or Christian theology. He argues: "He [Jesus] is the Word [which] God has to speak to us. Essentially, Jesus Christ is . . . an act of God, the self-manifestation of God" (p. 232). Again: "Because revelation is God's own Word, which breaks forth from the Divine Being in its very essence, therefore He who is the Word made flesh is, essentially, the mystery of God. Only thus does He stand really over against man, as the *monogenês*, as the 'only' Son, not as the *primus inter pares*" (p. 243). If that is true, then Jesus Christ is not a divine person at all in the sense of the Augsburg Confession, but only the mere revelation of the one Person who is God. Throughout his book, Brunner reasons on God in categories of Monarchianism. While he proposes to defend the doctrine of the two natures in Christ, his speculations on this point acknowledge fully neither the divine nor the human nature in the sense of the Nicene Creed. In Brunner's speculative theology Christ becomes a sort of mystical

—if not mythical—figure. Equally misleading is Brunner's representation of Christ's work. He writes for example: "The Person of the God-Man as such is the revelation of God, the coming of God to man" (p. 492). Or: "Christ therefore is . . . the 'second Adam,' in whom the nature of man is restored to harmony with the Divine Creation. This certainly takes place only inwardly, in the center of His Being, in the intention of His Will, not outwardly, in His 'form' which is indeed the 'form of a servant.' For He has taken upon Himself the likeness of 'sinful flesh.' But in Him, in His inner attitude, the Divine Image has been restored" (p. 497). This seems to deny the reality of Christ's vicarious satisfaction rendered upon the Cross. Brunner indeed asserts this divine work of satisfaction, but his philosophical speculations leave no room for the actual expiation which in a literal sense occurred when the God-Man truly suffered and died for the sins of the world. There is in Brunner's entire treatise a consistent weakening of Law and Gospel, of sin and grace, and this is aggravated by his lack of clarity in thought and expression, which clarity should be found in every dogmatical work that wants to lead its readers to the full divine truth. In conclusion we may add a word on Brunner's conception of faith. He says: "Faith . . . means a continual and ever-renewed obedient listening to the First Commandment." Again: "Thus faith does not consist in becoming free from the Law, but in pressing through the abstract character of the Law in itself to the personal will which stands behind it, to the personal will of God who is Love" (p. 619). How different is this conception of faith from that traditional Christian theology which regards faith as the *fiducia cordis*—the cordial trust of a sinner in God's gracious Gospel promises of free and full pardon through Christ Jesus! To Brunner saving faith means to go beyond the Law to Him who stands behind it and who is personally and essentially Love. This means ultimately salvation by the Law, though it is realized only in Christ Jesus, who is the revelation of God's Love and in whom alone God confronts man for a decision. It is obvious that the new orthodoxy, as the theology of Barth and Brunner and their followers has been called, is not orthodoxy at all in the sense of the Christian Confessions. It is rather a new liberalism which employs the traditional terms and forms in so bewildering a manner that the reader becomes perplexed and remains in doubt about his salvation, about which Brunner speaks at so great length, but which he never clarifies, because he does not proclaim the divine theology of Scripture. As a liberal he rather endeavors to teach men "with enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4).

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Man as Sinner in Contemporary American Realistic Theology. By Mary Frances Thelen. King's Crown Press, Morningside Heights, N. Y. 223 pages, 9×6. Price not given.

Professor Thelen's *Man as Sinner* is a valuable contribution to current theological literature, particularly in the field of so-called Realistic Theology, advocated by W. M. Horton, R. L. Calhoun, J. C. Bennett, and the Niebuhr brothers. The book is divided into two parts: (1) The background for the rise of Realistic Theology; and (2) The revival of Original Sin in Realistic Theology. In the first part Miss Thelen shows how modern religious Liberal-

ism, commonly known as Modernism, has entirely discarded the traditional doctrine of sin. Modernists, such as Tennant, Hocking, Elliott; secularists, such as Marx; and psychiatrists, such as Freud, totally reject the doctrine that man is a sinner. The Christian teaching of sin is incompatible with the naive optimism of Modernistic thought. Then came Karl Barth, and once more the concept of sin was examined with considerable interest. In America W. C. Horton and John Bennett challenged the false optimism of Liberalism and advocated a "religious realism" which was ready to face the reality of sin. It was especially Reinhold Niebuhr who, taking up the Barthian trend in theology, subjected the doctrine of sin to new scrutiny. His writings on sin are extensive and challenging. But Niebuhr does not champion the Christian doctrine of sin, though he moves in the terminology of traditional theology. Niebuhr is Semi-Pelagian in his treatment of sin, though he says some terrible things about man as a sinner and often seems to be in agreement with Augustinian theology. Nevertheless, in his thinking he is so far removed from orthodox Christian theology that he can declare that "original righteousness is a real possibility for man in the moment before the act" (of sinning) (p. 101). Indeed, "man may even in such a moment (of contrite recognition of his sin) possess the perfection before the Fall." (*Ibid.*) To Niebuhr the Fall is not historical at all, but symbolical and continuous. Of course, with the denial of sin in the Biblical sense there goes hand in hand the denial of divine grace in the sense of Augustine and Luther. Miss Thelen carefully examines the various books of Niebuhr, and her analyses are not only critical, frank, and accurate, but are also intelligibly presented. Niebuhr's theology really is not theology at all, but a sort of philosophy of orthodox theology. Horton, Calhoun, Bennett, and Richard Niebuhr largely share the views of Reinhold Niebuhr. Miss Thelen therefore interprets for the reader the definitions of sin as presented also by these men. Her work has been done thoroughly and well, and will serve as an introduction to Realistic Theology. A comprehensive bibliography has been appended, offering an exhaustive list of recent works on the subject treated. There is also an index, which is comprehensive and dependable, and will be found helpful for special topical study.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Toward World-Wide Christianity. Edited by O. Frederick Nolde. Harper and Brothers, N. Y. 263 pages, 7½×5½. \$1.50.

This is the fourth volume of the "Interseminary Series," which is being published for ministers and laymen to afford them an opportunity "to come abreast of contemporary thinking in America." Its contributors are largely liberals, such as S. M. Cavert, G. B. Oxnam, K. S. Latourette, W. M. Horton, Richard Niebuhr, H. P. Van Dusen, and others, representing the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The first volume bears the title *The Challenge of Our Culture*; the second, *The Church and Organized Movements*; the third, *The Gospel, the Church and the World*; the fourth, *Toward World-wide Christianity*; and the fifth and last (which will soon appear, edited by H. P. Van Dusen), *What Must the Church Do?* The subject of the fourth volume (now before us for review) might be broadly stated as "Ecumenicity" or "The Ecumenical Christian Church." Just what that

implies, and how that goal might be reached, is being thoroughly discussed in ten essays, written by four members of the Congregational-Christian Church (J. C. Bennett, Union Theological Seminary; H. P. Douglass, editor of *Christendom*; H. S. Leiper, American secretary for the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches; M. Spinka, professor at Hartford Theological Seminary), two of the Presbyterian Church (J. A. Mackay, editor of *Theology Today* and president of Princeton Theological Seminary, and W. S. Rycroft, executive secretary of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America), two of the United Lutheran Church (A. R. Wentz, president of the Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary, and O. F. Nolde, professor at the Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary), one of the Methodist Church (C. W. Iglehart, professor of Missions, Union Theological Seminary), and one of the Protestant Episcopal Church (E. M. McKee, rector of Saint George's Church, New York City). In the first essay Dr. Spinka gives his readers an overview of the principal Churches in America and Europe with their doctrinal and historical backgrounds. In his presentation of the Lutheran Reformation occur numerous errors, as, for example, that "Luther recognized as the core of the Scriptures, as the 'Word of God,' only such doctrine as was in accord with the Gospel" (p. 15) and that he taught "consubstantiation" (*ibid.*). Dr. Mackay discusses the "ecumenical goal," which is, in general, "Christ's redemptive passion for all men and His concern, formulated in the commandment which He added to the Decalogue, that His followers should 'love one another'" (p. 46). Dr. Bennett presents the various forms of "ecumenical Christianity," e. g., federation for co-operative witness, federal union, full corporate union, etc. Other subjects treated are "Ecumenical History," "Christian Community and World Order," "Ecumenicity in America," "Achieving the Ecumenical Ideal," and "Implementing the Ecumenical Ideal at the Parish Level." Of special importance to the reader are the appended documents: "The Church's Message," as formulated at the Lausanne Conference (1927), at the Madras Conference (1938), and as suggested by the Ad Interim Committee of the World Council of Churches (1946), a tentative constitution for the Proposed World Council of Churches," and a "Constitution of the International Missionary Council." We mention these details to show the reader just how earnest the men are who are advocating ecumenicity and how carefully they have worked out the various ecumenical techniques and projects in detail. It is true, there are still extremely great difficulties in the way of effecting the desired ecumenical setup, which its proponents by no means try to minimize. Nevertheless, the ardent zeal with which the goal is being pursued, as well as the many church unions which are now being effected, and, last but not least, the willingness of practically all major churches, outside the Roman Catholic, to cooperate in the endeavor make it likely that some sort of ecumenical church federation will finally be reached. Since the doctrinal requirements are extremely meager ("the acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior"), it will not be hard for conservative and liberal groups to agree on the fundamental basis, especially as its interpretation is ultimately left to groups and individuals. For confessing Lutheran churches the whole question of ecumenicity forms a very serious problem, since, on the one

hand, it is an outright unionistic movement, involving denial of Lutheran essentials, and, on the other, the ecumenical grouping, if achieved, will no doubt create for independent church bodies, unable to join for reasons of conscience, great difficulties, as, for example, in the area of domestic and foreign mission work. For this very reason this fourth volume of the "Interseminary Series" deserves careful study by such denominations as are interested in both their own autonomy as Churches and in their distinctive messages and doctrines. The various essays are well written in clear and simple language and may thus be studied also by groups of laymen, who should not be kept in ignorance about this very important and far-reaching movement.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Problems of New Testament Translation. By Edgar J. Goodspeed. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 215 pages. 5½×7½. \$2.50.

The scope of this little volume, which discusses a hundred problems in New Testament translation, is best stated in the author's own words:

The points taken up are, in general, those on which there seems to be most difference among translators and commentators. The discussion aims to introduce the reader into the translator's workshop and to show him the tools and materials with which the translator works at his great task, which is, with all the aids learning can provide — translations, commentaries, grammars, lexicons, concordances, papyri, inscriptions, monographs, articles, everything he can reach that bears on the subject — to find out just what each of the New Testament writers meant each sentence to convey; and then to set himself to cast that thought in such English as the translator would have used if he had thought of it himself; English so natural and easy that the reader will forget he is reading a translation. . . .

The author gives, first, the King James reading; then the Greek text of Westcott and Hort; then the solutions offered by some twenty modern versions; then whatever contributions recent lexical or grammatical studies have made; and then his own solution and translation. The fullness of the evidence presented makes the studies valuable even where one does not agree with the author's solution of the problem.

Many of the solutions are convincing and many of the translations happy, for example, John 1:5 and Romans 12:19; others strike one as merely clever *tours de force*, for example, Acts 1:18 and 6:2; while the arguments offered in defense of the translation "make upright" in Romans 3:28 hardly rise above the level of special pleading. It is worthy of note that five of the seven modern versions quoted on this passage favor the forensic sense of *δικαίωσιν*.

The book is written with Dr. Goodspeed's usual clarity and charm and is admirably printed and indexed.

M. H. FRANZMANN